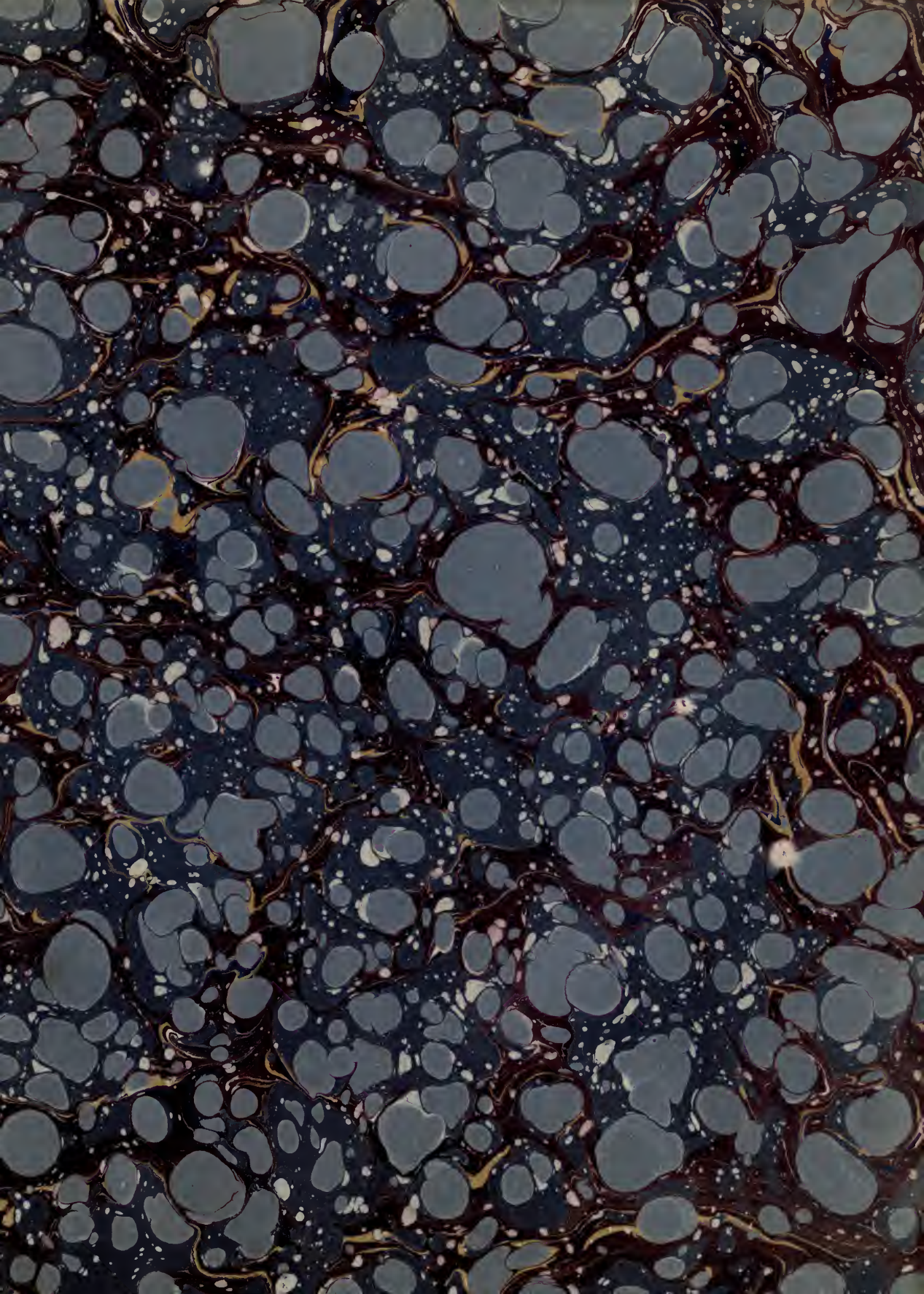
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THE BOOK OF BRITISH BALLADS.

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Poetry
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THE BOOK

OF

BRITISH BALLADS.



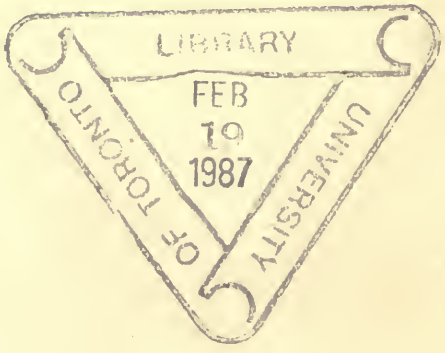
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INTRODUCTION.

Although various collections of British Ballads have been published, from time to time, since the elegant mind, refined taste, and sound judgment, of Bishop Percy were brought to bear upon the interesting and important subject, no attempt has been made to select and arrange, in a popular form, the best of these Ballads, from the several volumes in which they are scattered, and mixed up with a mass of inferior, or objectionable, compositions. This appears, indeed, to have been almost the only department of our "Polite Literature," to which public attention has not been adequately directed. Yet, without subscribing to the opinion, attributed to high authorities,—"Give me the making of

National Ballads, and I care not who makes the Laws,"—it requires no argument to prove their powerful influence, over the thoughts and feelings of all classes—the cultivated as well as the uncultivated. It is not too much to say, that in "uncivill ages" no source of instruction was so fertile,—and no missionary so effective in moulding the general sentiment, as "the blinde crowder"—it may have been,—"who, with no rougher voice than rude style," stirred up the sympathies of the multitude, and moved even the great heart of Sidney "more than with a trumpet." Nor can he be considered a visionary, who would draw conclusions, as to the pre-eminently moral character of Great Britain, from the fact, that the songs which encourage virtue and justice, uphold heroic fortitude, and inculcate, as an axiom, that "God defends the right," have been, in all ages, the chiefest "darlings of the common people."

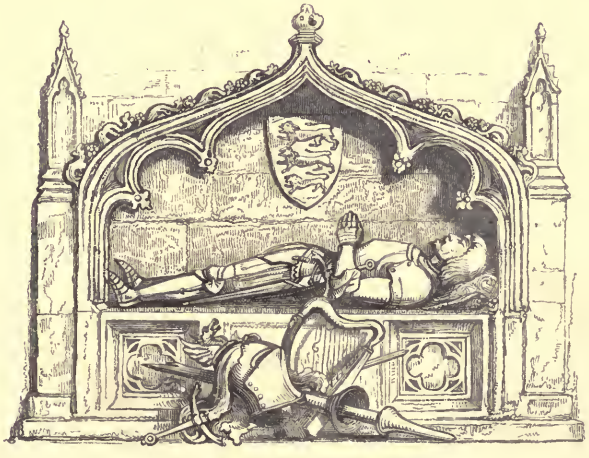
The Editor will endeavour to form a selection that shall be agreeable and interesting to the general reader, and not unsatisfactory to the antiquary and the scholar. It is, however, an essential part of his design, to collect only the Ballads that appear most worthy of preservation,—and not to reprint those which have no stronger recommendation than their rarity;—rejecting none, because they are already sufficiently known, and accepting none, because they are merely scarce. It will be his duty to decline no labour that may give completeness to his task; and to omit no opportunities of consulting available sources of information, whether accessible to all readers, or to be obtained only by patient industry and careful search. His plan, in its several details, it is unnecessary for him to explain, inasmuch as it is here sufficiently developed. It will be perceived, that he has not modernised the orthography; believing, that "these old and antique songs" will be most readily welcomed in their ancient dress,—

"The garb our Muses wore in former years."

It will not, however, be expedient to follow any chronological order; to do so, with accuracy, would be indeed impossible, for there are few of the more ancient compositions to which any date

can be assigned. The Editor will, therefore, consider himself justified in so arranging these Ballads as to obtain variety, both of style and illustration, without regard to the period at which they were written, or the sources in which they originated; prefacing each by such explanatory remarks as shall communicate all the information he can obtain concerning its history.

In illustrating the work, he has been ambitious, so to apply the great and admitted capabilities of British Art, as to prove that the embellished volumes of Germany and France are not of unapproachable excellence, in reference either to design or execution. He believes himself warranted in stating, that as the work progresses, he will be enabled to submit examples of the genius of a large proportion of the more accomplished artists of Great Britain—as exhibited in drawing upon wood. The supremacy of our English engravers, in this class of Art, has been long established.



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CHEVY-CHACE. Of the old heroic ballad of "Chevy-Chace," thus wrote Sir Philip Sidney:—"I never heard the old song of Percie and Douglas, that I found not my heart moved, more than with a trumpet: and yet it is sung but by some blinde crowder, with no rougher voice, than rude style; which beeing so evill apparelled in the dust and cobweb of that uncivill age, what would it work, trimmed in the gorgeous eloquence of Pindare!" There can be no doubt that he referred to the very ancient, and not to the comparatively modern, ballad; yet Mr. Addison, quoting the great authority, applies it to the latter,—an error that did not escape the penetration of Dr. Percy, who printed both;—the more ancient, from the preface to "Gul. Newbrigiensis Hist.," by the learned antiquary Thomas Hearne,—(by whom, the authorship is assigned to "R. Sheale;")—the more recent, from "the common stall copies." The older seems to have been forgotten, until revived in the "Reliques of Ancient English Poetry;" for Mr. Addison confines his criticism to the modern version, with which only he was acquainted; and it does not appear that any of his contemporaries detected the mistake.

The style of the old ballad, Dr. Percy characterises as "uncommonly rugged and uncouth;" and "the soul of chivalry," Sir Philip Sidney, describes it as "apparelled in the dust and cobweb of an uncivill age." It is, however, so full of vigour, life, and action,—so grand in its natural rudeness, that few will hesitate to subscribe to the opinion of Sir Walter Scott, that the current version has "lost in poetical fire and energy, and in vigour and pithiness of expression, more than it has gained in suavity of diction." We give, notwithstanding, the modern copy in preference to the ancient, as far more intelligible to the general reader; merely extracting a verse of the latter, as a sample of its rude style and rough strength:—this verse we take from the volume of Hearne, exactly as the antiquarian printed it, "in long lines without any division of stanzas," as it was found "in the old written copy:"—

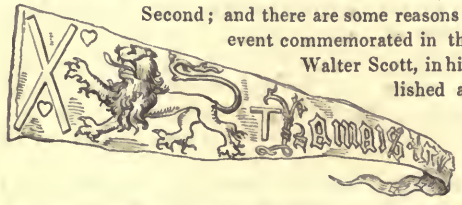
> The Perse owt off Northombarlande, and a vowe to God mayd he
> That he wold hunte in the mountayns off Chyvlat within days thi.,
> In the magger of doughte Dogles and all that ever with him be.

Although it was not the modern version that moved the great heart of Sidney "more than a trumpet," it is undoubtedly that which, for centuries, has maintained its popularity, in England, more firmly, and, perhaps, more universally, than any other of the "favourites of the people." And, whether we agree with Percy, in considering that the old ballad was "expressly modernised," in consequence of the "eulogium" it received in the "Defence of Poetry;" or with Scott, in believing the changes it has undergone to have been "produced by the gradual alterations of numerous reciters," there can be but one opinion as to its beauty, grandeur, force, and simplicity,—qualities, in the happy combination of which, it is unsurpassed by any composition in the language.

Such border feuds as that of Chevy-Chace were of frequent occurrence; and although no authentic historical documents exist to determine precisely the period

at which the "woeful hunting" actually occurred, there is no doubt that a battle was fought under circumstances such as those recorded in the ballad, and as little that the old poem, by which it is commemorated, was composed soon after the event. Evidence of its popularity has been given so early as the time of Queen Elizabeth, and of its being considered, even then, as the production of an "uncivill age." Reference is made to "the fourth Harry our Kyng;" but it was written, probably, during the reign of Henry the Sixth, when "James, the Scottish King," the first of the name, wore the crown of Scotland. That the affair took place previous to 1402 is certain; for the battle of Humbledowne, expressly alluded to, was fought on the fourteenth of September of that year.

The only battle mentioned in history, wherein an earl of Douglas was slain fighting with a Percy, was that of Otterbourne—the theme of several ballads, both of England and Scotland. This occurred in 1388, during the reign of Richard the Second; and there are some reasons for supposing it to have been the event commemorated in the ballad of Chevy-Chace. Sir Walter Scott, in his "Border Antiquities," has published an engraving of the Banner of Douglas, "supposed to have been" borne at this encounter; which we here copy; as well as the Pennon of Percy, that had been previously "taken from him" by Douglas, during an incursion of the Scots into the English marches; the attempt to regain which led to the fight of Otterbourne, where Douglas was killed, and Percy was taken prisoner. The circumstances connected with this contest, are strongly characteristic of the chivalric spirit of the age. They are given in Froissart. "The Earl of Douglas had a long conflict with Sir Henry Percy; and in the end, by gallantry of arms, won his pennon, to the great vexation of Sir Henry and the other English. The Earl of Douglas said—'I will carry this token of your prowess with me to Scotland, and place it on the tower of my castle at Dalkeith, that it may be seen from far.' 'By God, Earl Douglas,' replied Sir Harry, 'you shall not even bear it out of Northumberland.' 'You must come, then,' answered Earl Douglas, 'this night, and, if you will, venture to take it away.'"





A copy of this ballad—partly in black letter, with which we have collated the text of Dr. Percy—is preserved in the folio collection at the British Museum. One, however, much older, and more perfect, is in the Pepysian Collection, in the library of Magdalen College, Cambridge. Dr. Percy does not state that he had compared his text with this edition; and it is singular that it should have escaped his notice; for he was intimately acquainted with the collection, to which he makes frequent reference in the course of his work. That he overlooked it, we have little doubt; for although the differences are not many, nor very material, they are so obviously improvements, that he could not have hesitated to adopt them. We have introduced them in nearly every instance; the reader may ascertain their value by taking the trouble to compare our copy with that of Dr. Percy.



Franklin, del

Linton, sc

CHEVY-CHACE.

God prosper long our noble king,
Our lives and safetyes all;
A woeful hunting once there did
In Chevy-Chace befall.

To drive the deere with hound and horne,
Erle Percy took his way;
The child may rue that is unborne,
The hunting of that day.

Cheby-Chace.



The stout Erle of Northumberland
A vow to God did make,
His pleasure in the Scottish woods
Three summer days to take;

The cheefest harts in Chevy-Chace
To kill and beare away.
These tydings to Erle Douglas came,
In Scottland where he lay:

Who sent Erle Percy present word,
He wold prevent his sport.
The English Erle, not fearing that,
Did to the woods resort,

With fifteen hundred bow-men bold;
All chosen men of might,
Who knew full well in time of neede
To ayme their shafts arright.

The gallant greyhounds swiftly ran,
To chase the fallow deere:
On Munday they began to hunt,
When day-light did appeare;

And long before high noone they had
An hundred fat buckes slaine;
Then having dined, the drovyers went
To rouze the deere againe.

The bow-men mustered on the hills,
Well able to endure;
And all their reare, with speciall care,
That day was guarded sure.

The hounds ran swiftly through the woods,
The nimble deere to take,
That with their cryes the hills and dales
An eccho shrill did make.

Cheby-Chace.



Lord Percy to the quarry went,
To view the slaughter'd deere;
Quoth he, 'Erle Douglas promised
This day to meet me heere:

But if I thought he wold not come,
Noe longer wold I stay.'
With that, a brave younge gentleman
Thus to the Erle did say:

'Loe, yonder doth Erle Douglas come,
His men in armour bright;
Full twenty hundred Scottish speres
All marching in our sight;

All men of pleasant Tivydale,
Fast by the river Tweede:'
'Then cease your sports,' Erle Percy said,
'And take your bowes with speede:

And now with me, my countrymen,
Your courage forth advance;
For never was there champion yett,
In Scottland or in France,

That ever did on horsebacke come,
But if my hap it were,
I durst encounter man for man,
With him to break a spere.'

Erle Douglas on his milke-white steede,
Most like a baron bold,
Rode formost of his company,
Whose armour shone like gold.

'Show me,' sayd hee, 'whose men you bee,
That hunt soe boldly heere,
That, without my consent, do chase
And kill my fallow-deere.'

Regulations Board



The first man that did answer make,
Was noble Percy hee;
Who sayd, 'Wee list not to declare,
Nor show whose men wee bee:

Yet will wee spend our deerest blood,
Thy cheefest harts to slay.'
Then Douglas swore a solemne oathe,
And thus in rage did say,—

'Ere thus I will out-braved bee,
One of us two shall dye:
I know thee well, an erle thou art;
Lord Percy, soe am I.

But trust me, Percy, pittye it were,
And great offence to kill
Any of these our guiltlesse men,
For they have done no ill.

Let thou and I the battell trye,
And set our men aside.'
'Accurst bee he,' Erle Percy sayd,
'By whome this is denyed.'

Then stept a gallant squier forth,
Witherington was his name,
Who said, 'I wold not have it told
To Henry our king for shame,

That ere my captaine fought on foote,
And I stood looking on.
You two bee erles,' quo' Witherington,
'And I a squier alone:

Ile doe the best that doe I may,
While I have power to stand:
While I have power to weeld my sword,
Ile fight with heart and hand.'

Cheby-Chace.



Our English archers bent their bowes,
Their hearts were good and trew;
Att the first flight of arrowes sent,
Full four-score Scots they slew.

Yet bides Erle Douglas on the bent,
As chieftain stout and good;
As valiant captain, all unmov'd
The shock he firmly stood.

His host he parted had in three,
As leader ware and try'd;
And soon his spearmen on their foes
Bare down on every side.

Throughout the English archery
They dealt full many a wound:
But still our valiant Englishmen
All firmly kept their ground:

And throwing strait their bowes away,
They grasp'd their swords so bright:
And now sharp blows, a heavy shower,
On shields and helmets light.*

They closed full fast on everye side,
Noe slacknes there was found;
And many a gallant gentleman
Lay gasping on the ground.

* The four preceding stanzas, taken chiefly from the old ballad, were introduced by Dr. Percy, in lieu of the following stanza:—

"To drive the deere with hounde and horne,
Douglas bade on the bent;
Two captaines moved with mickle might
Their speres to shivers went."

These lines are, as Dr. Percy states, "confused and obscure,"—and seriously interrupt the progress of the story. The black letter copies, in the British Museum and the Pepysian Library, instead of "two captains," have "a captain;" and "the spere," in lieu of "their speres."



O Christ! it was a griefe to see,
How each one chose his spere,
And how the blood out of their brests
Did gush like water cleere.

At last these two stout erles did meet,
Like captaines of great might:
Like lyons wode, they layd on lode,
And made a cruell fight:

They fought untill they both did sweat,
With swords of tempered steele;
Until the blood, like drops of rain,
They trickling downe did feele.

'Yeeld thee, Lord Percy,' Douglas sayd;
'In faith I will thee bringe,
Where thou shalt high advanced bee
By James our Scottish king:

Thy ransome I will freely give,
And this report of thee,
Thou art the most couragious knight,
That ever I did see.'

Noe, Douglas,' quoth Erle Percy then,
'Thy proffer I doe scorne;
I will not yeelde to any Scott,
That ever yett was borne.'

With that, there came an arrow keene
Out of an English bow,
Which struck Erle Douglas to the heart,
A deepe and deadlye blow:

Who never spake more words than these,
'Fight on, my merry men all;
For why, my life is at an end;
Lord Percy sees my fall.'



Then leaving life, Erle Percy tooke
The dead man by the hand;
And said, 'Erle Douglas, for thy life
Wold I had lost my land.

O Christ! my verry heart doth bleed
With sorrow for thy sake;
For sure, a more redoubted knight
Mischance did never take.'

A knight amongst the Scotts there was,
Which saw Erle Douglas dye,
Who streight in wrath did vow revenge
Upon the Erle Percy:

Sir Hugh Mountgomery was he call'd,
Who, with a spere full bright,
Well-mounted on a gallant steed,
Ran fiercely through the fight;

And past the English archers all,
Without a dread or feare;
And through Erle Percy's body then
He thrust his hatefull spere;

With such vehement force and might
He did his body gore,
The staff ran through the other side
A large cloth-yard, and more.

So thus did both these nobles dye,
Whose courage none could staine:
An English archer then perceiv'd
The noble erle was slaine;

He had a bow bent in his hand,
Made of a trusty tree;
An arrow of a cloth-yard long
To the hard head haled he:



Against Sir Hugh Mountgomery
So right the shaft he sett;
The grey goose wing that was thereon
In his hearts bloode was wett.

This fight did last from breake of day,
Till setting of the sunne;
For when they rung the evening-bell,
The battel scarce was done.

With stout Erle Percy, there was slaine
Sir John of Egerton,
Sir Robert Ratcliff, and Sir John,
Sir James, that bold barròn.

And with Sir George and stout Sir James,
Both knights of good account,
Good Sir Ralph Raby there was slaine,
Whose prowesse did surmount.

For Witherington my heart is woe,
That ever he slaine shold be:
For when his legs were hewn in two
He knelt and fought on his knee.*

And with Erle Douglas, there was slaine
Sir Hugh Mountgomery,
Sir Charles Murray, that from the feeld
One foote wold never flee.

Sir Charles Murray of Ratcliff, too,
His sisters sonne was hee;
Sir David Lamb, so well esteem'd,
But saved he cold not bee.

* This stanza is introduced from the old ballad—in accordance with the suggestion of Dr. Percy; for although the death of Witherington, as described in the ancient copy, is exquisitely touching, in the modern version it "never fails to excite ridicule."



And the Lord Maxwell in like case
Did with Erle Douglas dye:
Of twenty hundred Scottish speres,
Scarce fifty-five did flye.

Of fifteen hundred Englishmen,
Went home but fifty-three;
The rest in Chevy-Chase were slaine,
Under the greene woode tree.

Next day did many widdowes come,
Their husbands to bewayle;
They washt their wounds in brinish teares,
But all wold not prevayle.

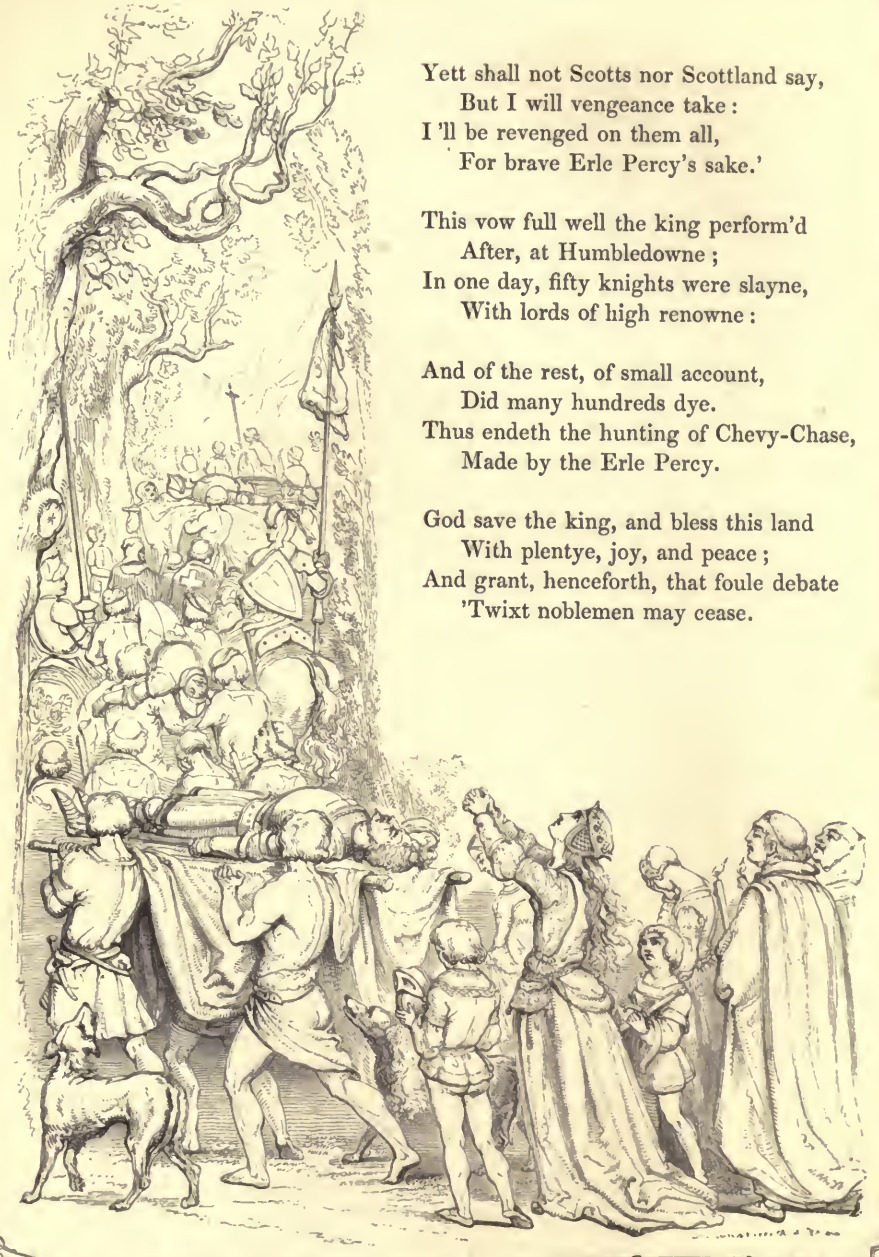
Their bodyes, bathed in purple blood,
They bore with them away:
They kist them dead a thousand times,
Ere they were cladd in clay.

The newes was brought to Eddenborrow,
Where Scottlands king did raigne,
That brave Erle Douglas suddenlye
Was with an arrow slaine:

'O heavy newes,' King James did say,
'Scottland can witnesse bee,
I have not any captaine more
Of such account as hee.'

Like tydings to King Henry came,
Within as short a space,
That Percy of Northumberland
Was slaine in Chevy-Chase:

'Now God be with him,' said our king,
'Sith 't will noe better bee;
I trust I have, within my realme,
Five hundred as good as hee:



Yett shall not Scotts nor Scottland say,
But I will vengeance take:
I 'll be revenged on them all,
For brave Erle Percy's sake.'

This vow full well the king perform'd
After, at Humbledowne;
In one day, fifty knights were slayne,
With lords of high renowne:

And of the rest, of small account,
Did many hundreds dye.
Thus endeth the hunting of Chevy-Chase,
Made by the Erle Percy.

God save the king, and bless this land
With plentye, joy, and peace;
And grant, henceforth, that foule debate
'Twixt noblemen may cease.

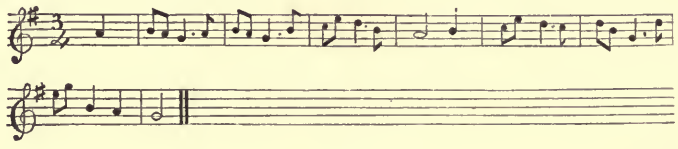
Franklin, del. Linton, sc.

THE CHILDREN IN THE WOOD is characterised by Mr. Addison, as "one of the darling songs of the common people," and "the delight of most Englishmen in some part of their age." In the motto prefixed to the essay in which he refers to it, he describes it, by a quotation from Horace, as "sine pondere et arte,"—"a plain and simple copy of nature, destitute of the helps and ornaments of art." Few compositions in the language have been more universally read, or more extensively popular, among all classes; so true it is, that—

One touch of nature makes the whole world kin;—

for the language is mean, and the style is poor. There is, indeed, to borrow from the same classic authority, "even a despicable simplicity in the verse;" and he carries his notions of refinement so far as to add, that "the quoting any of it would look like a design to turn it into ridicule,"—an opinion by no means worthy of the critic, and which conveys an ill compliment to the taste and judgment of his readers. But it makes its way into the heart by a surer passage than that of poetic grace: the sentiments are genuine and unaffected; and, therefore, "they are able to move the mind of the most polite reader with inward meltings of humanity and compassion." Mr. Addison perceived and appreciated the intrinsic value of the gem, through its coarse natural coating; it gave him "a most exquisite pleasure," and he recommended it to popularity by a short paper in the "Spectator."

According to Ritson, "it appears to have been written in 1595, being entered in that year on the Stationers' Books." Dr. Percy reprinted it,—collating it with another ancient edition,—from a black letter copy in the Pepys collection, where its title, at large, is, "The Children in the Wood; or, The Norfolk Gentleman's Last Will and Testament, to the tune of Rogero." This tune of "Rogero" we print, as it is given by Ritson:—



But Dr. Percy and Ritson are at issue as to the date of the composition. The former considers the subject of the ballad to have been taken from an old play, "Of a young child murthered in a wood, by two ruffins, with the consent of his unkle; by Robert Yarrington, 1601;" the story being similar in its leading features, although the scene of the drama, is laid, not in Norfolk, but in Padua. Percy's reasons for giving the merit of originality to the play-wright are by no means conclusive, and the point must be considered as determined by the fact of its previous entry on the Stationers' Books. Indeed, the ballad may be said to carry with it internal evidence

of its English birth; and was, most probably, founded on some actual occurrence; for its great merit lies in the apparent absence of invention, the seeming adherence to plain truth, and the thorough simplicity that pervades it, as if the author were content with the mere relation of the story—aiming at nothing but to tell a tale in rhyme; even the touching incident to which the composition is mainly indebted for its fame—the babes lying unburied in the forest,—

> Till robin redbreast painfully
> Did cover them with leaves,—

is a picture so natural as to have resulted without an effort of imagination. The justice accorded to the murderer,—the mode in which it is administered,—the way in which the crime is made manifest by the confession of one of the fellows who was "for a robbery judged to die,"—the tracing its discovery to the "blessed will of God,"—the picture of the uncle dying in prison for debt,—and the moral appended to the story,—may all be accepted as proofs of the English origin of the ballad.

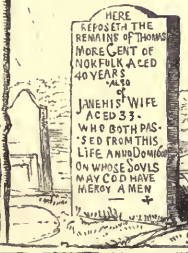
We regard the ballad, therefore, as a very model of the pure old English style,—the native species of poetry of this country; "rough rhymes and unadorned narratives, such"—we quote from Dr. Aikin—"as were ever the delight of the vulgar;"—and although the age which gave them birth was fertile in productions infinitely surpassing them in correctness, elegance, and beauty, the more simple compositions were sure to have made greater way with the "common sort of people." It is so, indeed, to this day; an assertion that may be readily established by reference to the contents of any modern ballad-monger's stall. Many who are insensible to the harmonies of refinement are readily aroused and excited by the voice of Nature.

Our version is taken, not from the "Reliques" of Dr. Percy—although the accomplished prelate took few liberties with the ballad as he found it in the Pepysian collection,—but from an old copy in the British Museum:—it is thus entitled; "The Norfolk Gentleman's Last Will and Testament, who, on his death-bed, committed the keeping of his two children, a boy and girl, to his own brother, who did most wickedly cause them to be destroyed, that so he might possess himself and children of the estate; but, by the just judgments of the Almighty, himself and all that he had, was destroyed from off the face of the earth. To the tune of Rogero, &c. London: Printed by and for W. D., and sold by C. Boxes, at the Sun and Bible, in Gilt-Spur Street." This ballad differs in many passages from that which Dr. Percy has given; and is, we think, more true to the rugged nature which the writer desired to exhibit. We have collated it, however, with that in black letter, in the Pepys Library, where its title is as follows:—"The Norfolk Gentleman, his Last Will and Testament, who committed the keeping of his children to his own brother, who dealt most wickedly with them, and how God plagued him for it. The tune—Rogero. Printed for W. Thackeray and T. Passinger." From this edition, we introduce a few verbal restorations; such, for example, as the word "painfully" instead of "piously," in the verse above quoted; and in the line that precedes it, the words "as babes wanting relief," in lieu of "as wanting due relief." The Pepysian ballad is ornamented by two coarse wood-cuts; the principal of which exhibits the robbers fighting over the sleeping babes, surrounded by robin-red-breasts, who are prematurely covering them with leaves.



THE CHILDREN IN THE WOOD

Now ponder well, you parents deare,
These wordes which I shall write;
A doleful story you shall heare,
In time brought forth to light.
A gentleman of good account
In Norfolke dwelt of late,
Whose wealth and riches did surmount
Most men of his estate.



Herbert, A R A del

Green, sc.



Herbert, A R A. del Green sc.

Sore sicke he was, and like to dye,
No helpe his life could save;
His wife by him as sicke did lye,
And both possest one grave.
No love betweene these two was lost,
Each was to other kinde,
In love they lived, in love they dyed,
And left two babes behinde:

The one a fine and pretty boy,
Not passing three yeares olde;
The other a girl more young than he,
And made in beautyes molde.
The father left his little son,
As plainlye doth appeare,
When he to perfect age should come,
Three hundred poundes a yeare.

And to his little daughter Jane,
Two hundred poundes in gold,
To be paid downe on marriage-day,
Which might not be controll'd:
But if the children chance to dye,
Ere they to age should come,
Their uncle should possesse their wealth;
For so the wille did run.

'Now, brother,' said the dying man,
'Look to my children deare;
Be good unto my boy and girl,
No friendes else have they here:
To God and you I do commend
My children night and day;
A little while be sure we have
Within this world to staye.

You must be father and mother both,
And uncle all in one;
God knowes what will become of them,
When I am dead and gone.'



With that bespake their mother deare,
'O brother kinde,' quoth shee,
'You are the man must bring my babes
To wealth or miserie:

If you do keep them carefully,
Then God will you reward;
If otherwise you seem to deal,
God will your deedes regard.'
With lippes as cold as any stone,
They kist the children small:
'God bless you both, my children deare!'
With that the teares did fall.

These speeches then their brother spoke
To this sicke couple there:
'The keeping of your children dear
Sweet sister, do not feare:
God never prosper me nor mine,
Nor aught else that I have,
If I do wrong your children deare,
When you are layd in grave.'

Their parents being dead and gone,
The children home he takes,
And brings them both unto his house,
Where much of them he makes.
He had not kept these pretty babes
A twelvemonth and a daye,
But, for their wealth, he did devise
To make them both awaye.

He bargain'd with two ruffians rude,
Which were of furious mood,
That they should take the children young,
And slay them in a wood.
He told his wife, and all he had,
He would the children send
To be brought up in faire Londòn,
With one that was his friend.



Away then went the pretty babes,
Rejoycing at that tide,
Rejoycing with a merry minde,
They should on cock-horse ride.
They prate and prattle pleasantly,
As they rode on the waye,
To those that should their butchers be,
And work their lives decaye:

So that the pretty speeche they had,
Made murtherers heart relent:
And they that tooke the deed to do,
Full sore they did repent.
Yet one of them more hard of heart,
Did vowe to do his charge,
Because the wretch, that hired him,
Had paid him very large.

The other would not agree thereto,
So here they fell at strife;
With one another they did fight,
About the childrens life:
And he that was of mildest mood,
Did slaye the other there,
Within an unfrequented wood;
Where babes did quake for feare!

He took the children by the hand,
When teares stood in their eye,
And bade them come and go with him,
And look they did not crye:
And two long miles he ledd them thus,
While they for bread complaine:
'Stay here,' quoth he, 'I 'll bring ye bread,
When I do come againe.'

These pretty babes, with hand in hand,
Went wandering up and downe;
But never more they sawe the man
Approaching from the town;



Their prettye lippes with black-berries,
Were all besmear'd and dyed,
And when they sawe the darksome night,
They sat them downe and cryed.

Thus wandered these two pretty babes,
Till deathe did end their grief,
In one anothers armes they dyed,
As babes wanting relief:
No burial these pretty babes
Of any man receives,
Till robin-red-breast painfully
Did cover them with leaves.

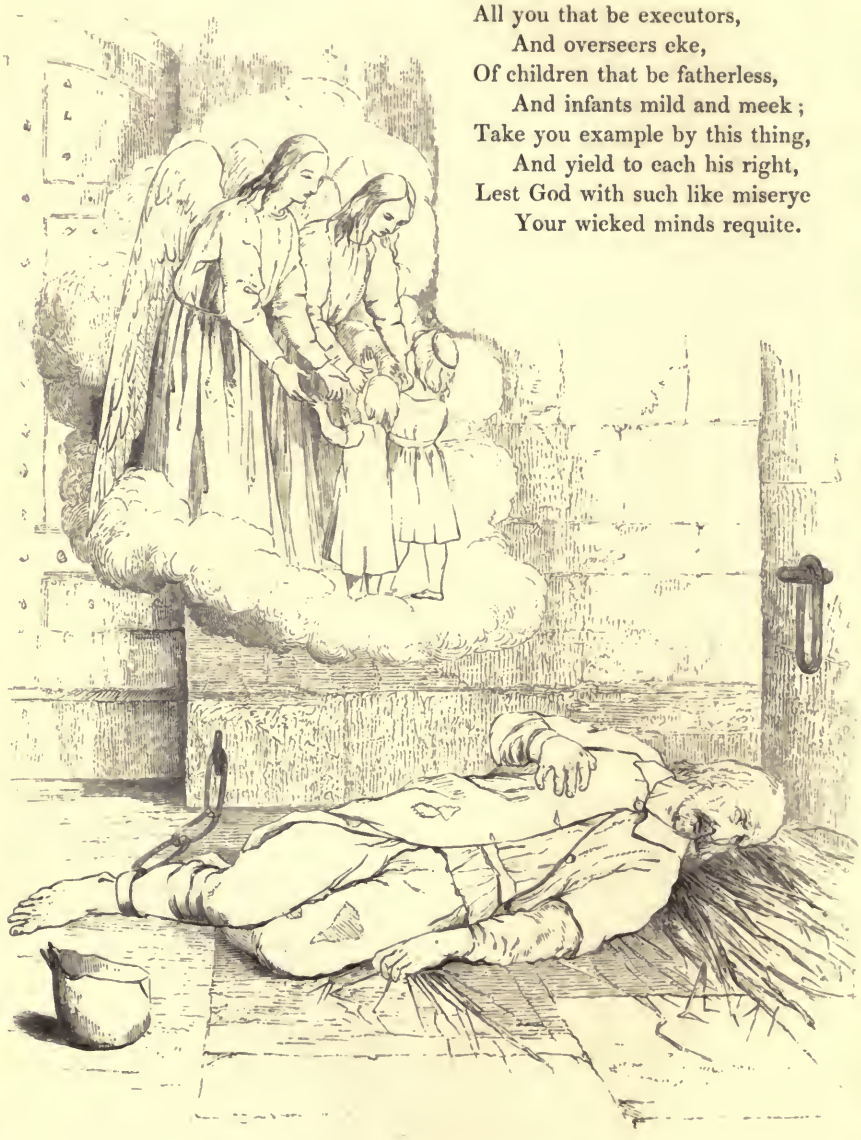
And now the heavy wrathe of God
Upon their uncle fell;
Yea, fearfull fiends did haunt his house,
His conscience felt an hell:
His barnes were fired, his goods consum'd,
His landes were barren made,
His cattle dyed within the field,
And nothing with him stayd.

And in the voyage of Portugal
Two of his sonnes did dye;
And to conclude, himself was brought
Unto much miserye:
He pawn'd and mortgaged all his land
Ere seven years came about.
And now at length this wicked act
Did by this meanes come out:

The fellowe, that did take in hand
These children for to kill,
Was for a robbery judg'd to dye,
As was God's blessed will:
Who did confess the very truth,
The which is here exprest;
Their uncle dyed while he for debt
Did long in prison rest.

The Children in the Wood.

All you that be executors,
And overseers eke,
Of children that be fatherless,
And infants mild and meek;
Take you example by this thing,
And yield to each his right,
Lest God with such like miserye
Your wicked minds requite.



Herbert, A R A del

Green, sc.

FAIR ROSAMOND. The fate of "Fair Rosamond," was a favourite theme with the early minstrels, and the historians have not disdained to preserve the memory of her exceeding beauty, and her sad story. It is, however, briefly told. She was, according to Stowe, who follows Higden the monk of Chester, the daughter of Walter Lord Clifford; became the "lemman" of Henry the Second, to whom she bore two sons, William Longsword, Earl of Salisbury, and Geoffrey, Bishop of Lincoln; and died at Woodstock, A.D. 1177,—"poisoned by Queen Eleanor, as some thought." Stowe proceeds to relate, that her royal lover "had made for her a house of wonderfull working; so that no man or woman might come to her but he that was instructed by the king, or such as were right secret with him, touching the matter. This house, after some, was named Labyrinthus, or Dedalus' worke, which was wrought like unto a knot, in a garden called a maze." Drayton, in his "Epistle to Rosamond," using the poet's license, describes it as "consisting of vaults under ground, arched and walled;" and in the ballad we shall copy, it is more minutely pictured as "a bower," curiously built of "stone and timber strong," having no fewer than one hundred and fifty doors; and so cunningly contrived, with turnings round about, that none could obtain access to it except by "a clue of thread." But jealousy is proverbially quick-sighted. Queen Elinor discovered the secret, possessed herself of "the clue of thriddle or silk," and "so dealt" with her rival that—she lived not long. Authorities differ as to the mode by which the queen obtained the necessary guide. Hollinshed seriously relates, that "the king had drawne it after him out of her chamber with his foot;" and Speed, that "it fell from Rosamond's lappe as she sate to take ayre, and suddenly fleeing from the sight of the searcher, the end of her silke fastened to her foote, and the clew still unwinding, remained behinde." But historians content themselves with informing us, that the lady "lived not long after," and do not insinuate that she was wounded with other weapons than sharp words; although tradition and the ballad-makers, unite in charging the queen with the murder of Fair Rosamond, by compelling her to drink poison.

She was buried at "Godstow, in a house of nunnes, beside Oxford," and, according to Stowe, "with these verses carved upon her tombe,"—

Hic jacet in tumba, Rosa mundi, non Rosa munda!
Non redolet, sed olet, quae redolere solet.

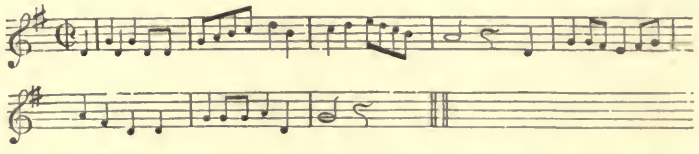
Her body, we learn from Speed, in his "History of Henry the Second," remained "in the quire under a fair hearse of silk, with tapers continually burning before it, which, as it should seeme, was so furnished at the charges of King John—that the holy virgins might releeve, with their prayers, the soules of his father, King Henrie, and of Lady Rosamond, there interred."

Percy printed this ballad: and also "Queen Eleanor's Confession," "from an old copy, in which the queen is described as confessing her numerous crimes to her husband, disguised as a friar, in the presence of her paramour, 'Earl Marshall,' who

had previously obtained the king's promise, that no harm should happen to him, 'no matter what the queen might say.'" At the conclusion of the ceremony,—

> The King lookt over his left shoulder,
> And a grim look, looked he:
> 'Earl Marshall,' he said, 'but for my oath,
> Thou hadst swung on the gallows tree.'

This verse is quoted, not from Percy, but from a more spirited version of the story, in the "Minstrelsy, Ancient and Modern," of William Motherwell, by whom it was "recovered from recitation." The ballad was recited, or sung, to the following air:—



Of this ballad, there are two copies in the folio collection at the British Museum; one of them is in black letter, "printed for C. Bates, in Pye Corner." Another ballad, together with the air to which it was recited, or sung, printed in "The Garland of Delight," makes the queen a penitent in prison, where she "was kept twenty-six years;" and in another, the "Overthrow of Fair Rosamond" is stated to have been caused by "her brother's unadvisedly praising her beauty to two young knights of Salisbury as they rid on the road;" King Harry, who chanced to be by, overheard the conversation, and "writ three letters sealed with gold," which he charged young Clifford to deliver into the maiden's hands. The result was, her arrival at court, her subsequent removal to Woodstock, and her death, "by force of poison strong."

According to Dr. Percy, "the ballad (of "Fair Rosamond") appears to have been first published in "Strange Histories, or Songes and Sonets, of Kinges, Princes, Dukes, Lords, Ladyes, Knights, and Gentlemen, &c. By Thomas Deloney. Lond. 1612. 4to." Percy printed it, "with conjectural emendations," from four ancient copies in black letter; two of them in the Pepys Library. With these two we have collated it, restoring several of the passages as we there found them. The reader who will take the trouble to compare our copy with that of Dr. Percy, will find that these "restorations" are neither few in number nor of small importance. One example may, perhaps, suffice:—

PERCY'S COPY.	THE PEPYSIAN COPY.
Faire ladies brooke not bloodye warres;	Faire ladies brooke not bloody warres;
Soft peace their sexe delightes;	Sweet peace their pleasures breede
Not rugged campes, but courtlye bowers;	The nourisher of hearts content,
Gay feastes, nor cruell fightes.	Which fancy first did feede.

Deloney's "Strange Histories" has been recently reprinted by the "Percy Society," from the only perfect copy known to exist. Its date is 1607. The ballad, here, very closely resembles that which occurs in the Pepysian Collection; although in several passages it is different.



FAIR ROSAMOND.

When as King Henry rulde this land,
The second of that name,
Besides the queene, he dearly lovde
A faire and comely dame.

Most peerlesse was her beautye founde,
Her favour, and her face;
A sweeter creature in this worlde
Did never prince embrace.

Her crisped lockes like threads of golde
Appeard to each mans sight;
Her sparkling eyes, like Orient pearles,
Did cast a heavenlye light.

Franklin d ˢ.

T. Williams sc

Bibliotheca Regia



The blood within her chrystal cheekes
Did such a colour drive,
As though the lillye and the rose
For mastership did strive.

Yea Rosamond, fair Rosamond,
Her name was called so,
To whom our queene, dame Elinor,
Was known a deadlye foe.

The king, therefore, for her defence,
Against the furious queene,
At Woodstocke builded such a bower,
The like was never seene.

Most curiously that bower was built
Of stone and timber strong,
An hundred and fifty doors
Did to this bower belong:

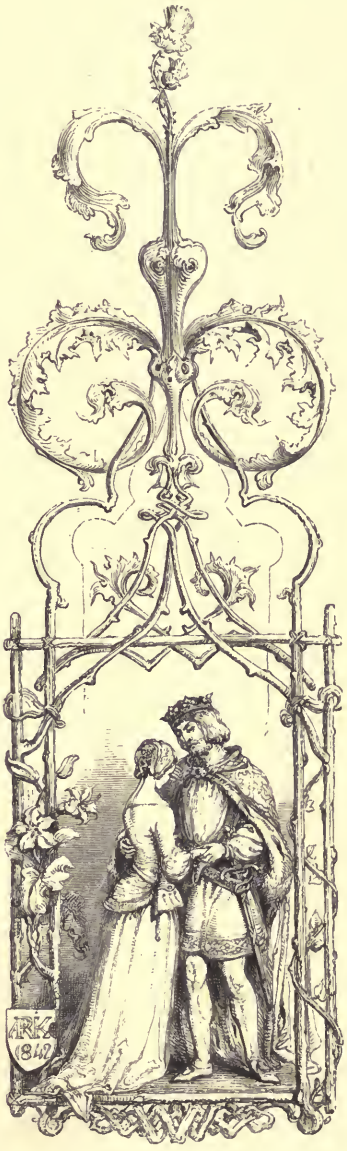
And they so cunninglye contriv'd,
With turnings round about,
That none but with a clue of thread
Could enter in or out.

And for his love and ladyes sake,
That was so faire and brighte,
The keeping of this bower he gave
Unto a valiant knighte.

But fortune, that doth often frowne
Where she before did smile,
The kinges delighte, the ladyes joy,
Full soon shee did beguile:

For why, the kinges ungracious sonne,
Whom he did high advance,
Against his father raised warres
Within the realme of France.

Fair Rosamond.



But yet before our comelye king
The English land forsooke,
Of Rosamond, his ladye faire,
His farewelle thus he tooke:

'My Rosamond, my only Rose,
That pleasest best mine eye:
The fairest flower in all the worlde
To feed my fantasye:

The flower of mine affected heart,
Whose sweetness doth excelle;
My royal Rose, a thousand times,
I bid thee nowe farewelle!

For I must leave my fairest flower,
My sweetest Rose, a space,
And cross the seas to famous France,
Proud rebelles to abase.

But yet, my Rose, be sure thou shalt
My coming shortly see,
And in my heart, when hence I am,
Ile beare my Rose with mee.'

When Rosamond, that ladye brighte,
Did heare the kinge saye soe,
The sorrowe of her grieved heart
Her outward looks did showe;

And from her cleare and crystall eyes
The teares gusht out apace,
Which like the silver-pearled dewe
Ranne downe her comely face.

Her lippes erst like the corall redde,
Did waxe both wan and pale,
And for the sorrowe she conceivde
Her vitall spirits faile;



And falling down all in a swoone
Before King Henryes face,
Full oft he in his princelye armes
Her body did embrace;

And twentye times, with watery eyes,
He kist her tender cheeke,
Until he had revivde againe
Her senses milde and meeke.

'Why grieves my Rose, my sweetest Rose?'
The king did often say.
'Because,' quoth shee, 'to bloodye warres
My lord must pass awaye.

But sith your grace in forrayne coastes,
Amonge your foes unkinde
Must goe to hazarde life and limbe,
Why should I staye behinde?

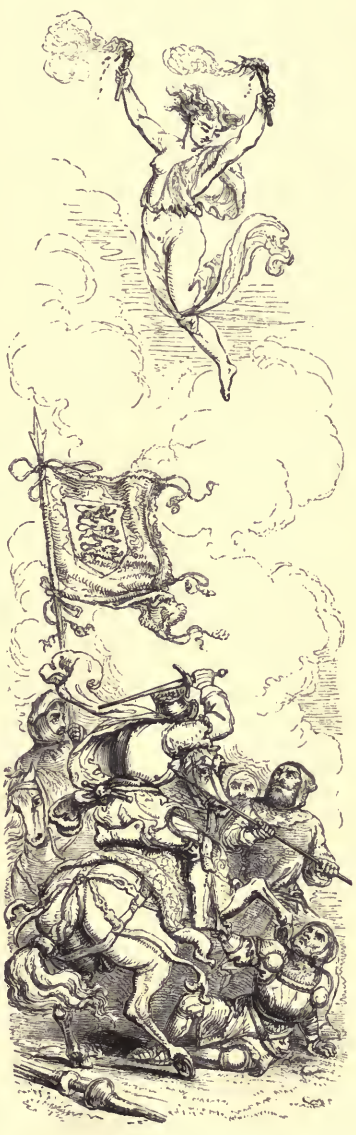
Nay, rather let me, like a page,
Your sworde and target beare,
That on my breast the blowes may lighte,
Which would offend you there.

Or lett mee, in your royal tent,
Prepare your bed at nighte,
And with sweete baths refresh your grace,
At your returne from fighte.

So I your presence may enjoye
No toil I will refuse;
But wanting you, my life is death:
Nay, death Ile rather choose.'

'Content thy self, my dearest love;
Thy rest at home shall bee
In Englandes sweet and pleasant isle;
For travell fits not thee.

Fair Rosamond.



Faire ladies brooke not bloodye warres;
Sweet peace their pleasures breede,
The nourisher of hearts content,
Which fancy first did feede.

My Rose shall rest in Woodstocke bower,
With musickes sweete delight;
Whilst I, amonge the piercing pikes,
Against my foes do fighte.

My Rose in robes of pearle and golde,
With diamonds richly dight;
Shall dance the galliards of my love,
Whilst I my foes do fighte.

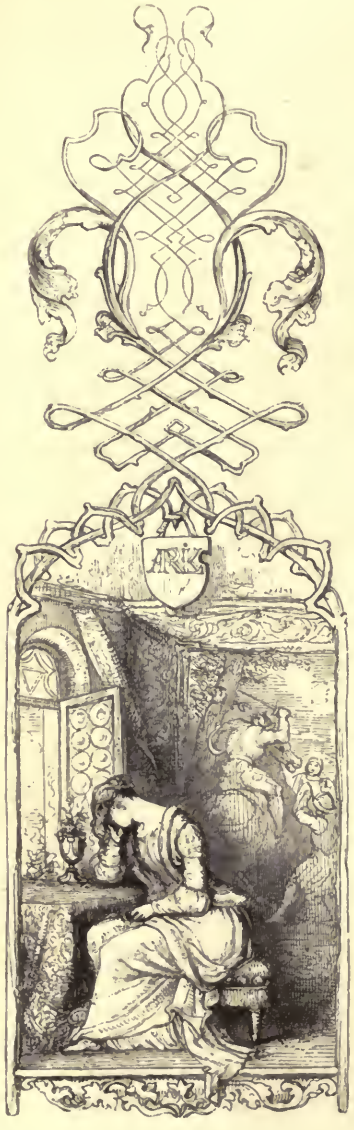
And you, Sir Thomas, whom I truste
To bee my love's defence;
Be careful of my gallant Rose
When I am parted hence.'

And therewithall he fetcht a sigh,
As though his heart would breake:
And Rosamond, for inward griefe,
Not one plaine worde could speake.

And at their parting well they mighte
In heart be grieved sore:
After that daye faire Rosamond
The king did see no more.

For when his grace had passed the seas,
And into France was gone;
With envious heart, Queene Elinor,
To Woodstocke came anone.

And forth she calls the trustye knighte
Which kept this curious bower;
Who with his clue of twined thread,
Came from the famous flower.



And when that they had wounded him,
The queene his thread did gette,
And went where Lady Rosamond
Was like an angell sette.

And when the queene with stedfast eye
Beheld her heavenlye face,
She was amazed in her minde
At her exceeding grace.*

* In the old ballad,—"Rosamond's Overthrow," to which we have referred in our introductory remarks,—the interview between the enraged Queen and her hapless rival is thus described:—

* * * * *

The angry Queen with malice fraught,
Could not herself contain,
Till she Fair Rosamond had brought
To her sad, fatal bane.
The sweet and charming precious Rose,
King Henry's chief delight!
The Queen she to her bower goes,
And wrought her hateful spight.

But when she to the bower came,
Where Lady Clifford lay,
Enraged Ellinor by name,
She could not find the way,
Until the silken clew of thread,
Became a fatal guide
Unto the Queen, who laid her dead
Ere she was satisfied.

Alas! it was no small surprise
To Rosamond the fair;
When death appeared before her eyes,
No faithful friend was there,
Who could stand up in her defence,
To put the potion by;
So, by the hands of violence,
Compelled she was to die.

* * * * *

I will not pardon you, she said,
So take this fatal cup;
And you may well be satisfied
I'll see you drink it up.
Then with her fair and milk-white hand
The fatal cup she took;
Which being drank, she could not stand,
But soon the world forsook.

* * * * *



'Cast off from thee thy robes,' she said,
'That riche and costlye bee;
And drinke thou up this deadlye draught,
Which I have brought to thee.'*

But presentlye upon her knees
Sweet Rosamond did falle;
And pardon of the queene she crav'd
For her offences all.

'Take pittie on my youthfull yeares,'
Fair Rosamond did crye;
'And lett mee not with poison stronge
Enforced bee to dye.

I will renounce my sinfull life,
And in some cloyster bide;
Or else be banisht, if you please,
To range the world soe wide;

And for the fault that I have done,
Though I was forc'd theretoe,
Preserve my life, and punish mee
As you thinke good to doe.'

And with these words, her lillie handes
She wrunge full often there;
And downe along her comelye face
Did trickle many a teare.

* In "the Lamentation of Queen Elinor," during her "twenty-six years'" imprisonment, she is made to confess the crime,—

'The which I did with all despite,
Because she was the King's delight.'

And in "Queen Elinor's Confession," she informs the King,—

'The next vile thing that ever I did,
To you I will discover;
I poysoned faire Rosamond,
All in faire Woodstocke Bower.'

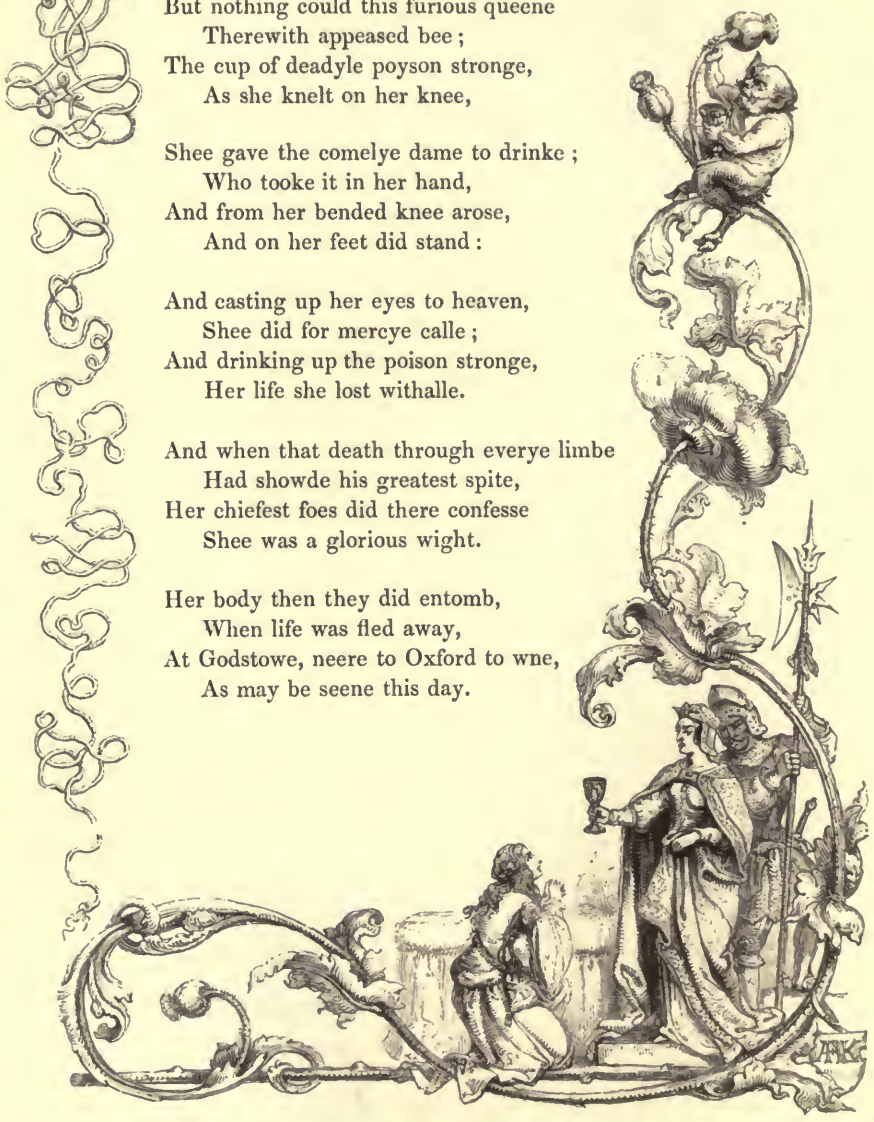
But nothing could this furious queene
Therewith appeased bee;
The cup of deadyle poyson stronge,
As she knelt on her knee,

Shee gave the comelye dame to drinke;
Who tooke it in her hand,
And from her bended knee arose,
And on her feet did stand:

And casting up her eyes to heaven,
Shee did for mercye calle;
And drinking up the poison stronge,
Her life she lost withalle.

And when that death through everye limbe
Had showde his greatest spite,
Her chiefest foes did there confesse
Shee was a glorious wight.

Her body then they did entomb,
When life was fled away,
At Godstowe, neere to Oxford to wne,
As may be seene this day.



Franklin, del

Walmsley, sc.

THE DEMON LOVER. This ballad first appeared in the "Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border;" it was communicated to Sir Walter Scott by Mr. William Laidlaw, by whom it was "taken down from recitation." Mr. Motherwell, by whom it was reprinted in his valuable volume, "Minstrelsy, Ancient and Modern," surmises that, "although it would be unfair for a moment to imagine that Sir Walter Scott made any addition to it, Mr. Laidlaw may have improved upon its naked original." That he did so, is by no means unlikely; nor is it very improbable that, in passing through the alembic of the great Magician of the North, it received additional purity, without losing aught of its intrinsic worth. Mr. Motherwell, "with all his industry, was unable to find it in a more perfect state than this,"—which the reader will be interested in comparing with the appended copy from the "Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border:"—

'I have seven ship upon the sea
Laden with the finest gold,
And mariners to wait us upon—
All these you may behold.

And I have shoes for my love's feet,
Beaten of the purest gold,
And lined with the velvet soft,
To keep my love's feet from the cold.

O how do you love the ship,' he said,
'Or how do you love the sea?
Or how do you love the bold mariners,
That wait upon thee and me?'

'O I do love the ship,' she said,
'And I do love the sea;
But woe be to the dim mariners,
That nowhere I can see.'

They had not sailed a mile awa',
Never a mile but one,
When she began to weep and mourn,
And to think on her little wee son.

'O hold your tongue, my dear,' he said,
'And let all your weeping abee,
For I 'll soon show to you how the lilles grow
On the banks of Italy.'

They had not sailed a mile awa',
Never a mile but two,
Until she espied his cloven foot,
From his gay robes sticking thro'.

They had not sailed a mile awa'.
Never a mile but three,
When dark dark grew his eerie looks,
And raging grew the sea.

They had not sailed a mile awa',
Never a mile but four,
When the little wee ship ran round about
And never was seen more.

If this be, in reality, the skeleton which Mr. Laidlaw clothed in sinews and flesh, he has given unquestionable proof of genius of a very rare order. There is, however, little doubt that he had actually "taken down, from recitation," a much more perfect copy, to which he gave some "finishing touches" of his own; for the composition bears unequivocal marks of old time; and a collateral proof of its antiquity, in a more extended form, is supplied by an authority, to which reference is made by the accomplished editor of the latest edition of the "Border Minstrelsy." Mr. Buchan, in his "Ancient Ballads and Songs of the North of Scotland, hitherto unpublished," prints another version of the story, under the title of "James Herries;" with this difference, however, that here, the lover, who wreaks his vengeance on the "fause

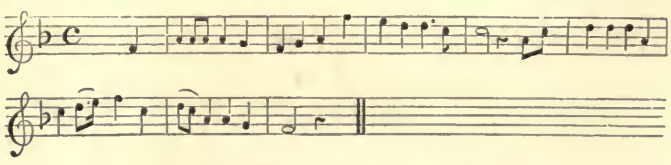
woman," is not a demon with a "cloven foot," but the ghost of a "first true love;" —the other incidents are precisely similar, and many of the lines are exactly the same; although as a whole it is far less grand, touching, and dramatic, than the version as preserved by Sir Walter Scott. Mr. Buchan gives three additional stanzas, descriptive of the misery of the betrayed husband; they are fine and effective, and contribute strongly to impress the moral of the tale:—

'O wae be to the ship, the ship,
And wae be to the sea;
And wae be to the mariners
Took Jeanie Douglas frae me!

O bonny, bonny was my love,
A pleasure to behold;
The very hair o' my love's head
Was like the threads of gold.

O bonny was her cheek, her cheek,
And bonny was her chin;
And bonny was the bride she was,
The day she was made mine.'

From Mr. Motherwell's volume we copy the air, to which the old ballad was sung:—



The legend contained in the ballad is, according to Sir Walter Scott, "in various shapes current in Scotland;" but it is by no means peculiar to that country. Similar stories are told in many of the English counties; and in Ireland it is very common;—the moral conveying a warning against the crime of infidelity. Sir Walter says, "I remember to have heard a ballad, in which a fiend is introduced paying his addresses to a beautiful maiden; but, disconcerted by the holy herbs she wore in her bosom, makes the following lines the burthen of his courtship:—

'Gin ye wish to be leman mine,
Lay aside the St. John's wort, and the vervain.'"

The same power of keeping away evil spirits is attributed to the vervain in Ireland; where, when it is pulled by village mediciners, while the morning dew is on the ground, this verse is generally repeated:—

'Vervain, thou growest upon holy ground,
In Mount Calvary thou wert found;
Thou curest all sores and all diseases,
And in the name of Holy Jesus,
I pull you out of the ground.'

The unhappy lady whose fate is described in the accompanying ballad had no such "protection," and was without that surer safeguard, to which the great poet refers as a possession, o'er which

No goblin or swart fairy of the mine
Hath hurtful power.



THE DEMON LOVER.

'O WHERE have you been my long, long love,
This long seven years and mair?'
'O I 'm come to seek my former vows,
Ye granted me before.'

'O hold your tongue of your former vows,
For they will breed sad strife;
O hold your tongue of your former vows,
For I am become a wife.'



He turned him right and round about,
And the tear blinded his e'e;
'I wad never hae trodden on Irish ground,
If it had not been for thee.

I might have had a king's daughter,
Far far beyond the sea;
I might have had a king's daughter,
Had it not been for love o' thee.'

'If ye might have had a king's daughter,
Yersell ye had to blame;
Ye might have taken the king's daughter,
For ye kend that I was nane.'

'O faulse are the vows o' womankind,
But fair is their faulse bodie;
I never would hae trodden on Irish ground,
Had it not been for love o' thee.'

'If I was to leave my husband dear,
And my two babes also,
O what have you to take me to,
If with you I should go?'

'I have seven ships upon the sea,
The eighth brought me to land;
With four-and-twenty bold mariners,
And music on every hand.'

She has taken up her two little babes,
Kissed them baith cheek and chin:
'O fare ye weel, my ain two babes,
For I 'll never see you again.'

She set her foot upon the ship,
No mariners could she behold;
But the sails were o' the taffetie,
And the masts o' the beaten gold.

The Demon Lover.



She had not sailed a league, a league,
A league but barely three,
When dismal grew his countenance,
And drumlie grew his e'e.

The masts that were like the beaten gold,
Bent not on the heaving seas;
And the sails, that were o' the taffetie,
Filled not in the eastland breeze.

They had not sailed a league, a league,
A league but barely three,
Until she espied his cloven foot,
And she wept right bitterlie.*

'O hold your tongue of your weeping,' says he,
'Of your weeping now let me be;
I will show you how the lilies grow
On the banks of Italy.'

'O what hills are yon, yon pleasant hills,
That the sun shines sweetly on?'
'O yon are the hills of heaven,' he said,
'Where you will never win.'

'O whaten a mountain is yon,' she said,
'All so dreary wi' frost and snow?'
'O yon is the mountain of hell,' he cried,
'Where you and I will go.'

* In Mr. Buchan's ballad, remorse is made to visit the heroine, not by the sight of the "cloven foot," but by a feeling more natural and more worthy:—

She minded on her dear husband,
Her little son tee.

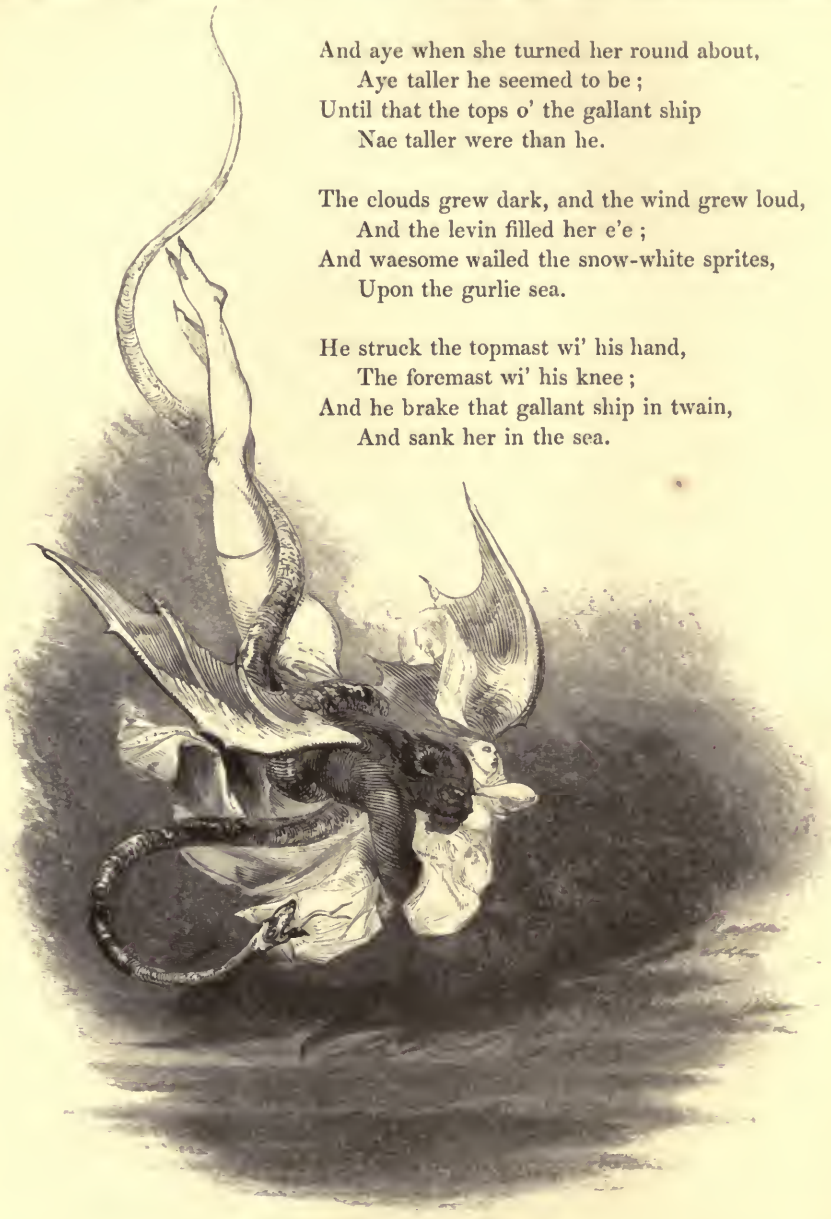
And, at the same time,—

The thoughts o' grief came in her mind,
And she langed for to be hame;

While the miserable woman thus prays:—

'I may be buried in Scottish ground,
Where I was bred and born.'

The Demon Lover.



And aye when she turned her round about,
Aye taller he seemed to be;
Until that the tops o' the gallant ship
Nae taller were than he.

The clouds grew dark, and the wind grew loud,
And the levin filled her e'e;
And waesome wailed the snow-white sprites,
Upon the gurlie sea.

He struck the topmast wi' his hand,
The foremast wi' his knee;
And he brake that gallant ship in twain,
And sank her in the sea.

Gilbert, del. J. Bastin, sc.

THE NUT-BROWN MAYD. The remote antiquity of this beautiful composition is unquestionable. There are, indeed, satisfactory reasons for believing that we may assign to it a date so remote as the year 1400. The only ancient copy of it, known to exist, is to be found in Arnold's Chronicle, where alone a discovery of it has been, hitherto, made: this was first printed about 1502; and although the old chronicler did not accompany it with any explanatory note or comment, it is more than probable that, if it had been the production of a contemporary, or of a writer not far removed from his own time, the antiquary would either have given the name of the author, or not have considered it his business to preserve the Poem.

Dr. Percy printed it in his "Reliques:" "its sentimental beauties," he says, "have always recommended it to readers of taste, notwithstanding the rust of antiquity which obscures the style and expression." He found in his ancient folio MS.,—to which we shall, hereafter, have occasion to refer,—a "very corrupt and defective" copy, by which, however, he was enabled to effect a great improvement in one passage;* he consulted the several editions of Arnold, the reprint of 1707, and some other sources, and restored the pure old ballad to popularity. Although his copy varies in no very essential particulars from the one that exists in Arnold's Chronicle, with which we have collated it, some passages he has changed without improving, and a few he has altered to advantage. The latter we have retained; the former we have presumed to restore.

In the original, every other line is divided into two. It is unnecessary to occupy the space that would be required so to copy it; we extract, part of one of the verses, as an example of the manner, as well as the style, in which it was first printed.

Now I beginne
Soo that ye me answere
Wherfore ye
That present be
I pray you geue an eare
I am the knyght
I cum be nyght
As secret as I can
Sayng alas
Thus standyth the cause
I am a banysshed man.

Of its popularity in the sixteenth century, evidence is supplied by the fact, that it was parodied, in compliance with an abused fashion of the period—to convert familiar songs into pious homilies in rhyme. A copy, in black letter, with the colophon "thus endeth the boke of the newe not browne mayd vpon the passion of

* The passage referred to occurs in verse 26; where the line "of them I wolde be one," is given in lieu of the words "yet wolde I be that one."

Cryste," was reprinted in 1820, for the Roxburghe Club. The ballad was first made familiar to comparatively modern readers in 1707, when it was revived in the "Muses' Mercury," where it was given as "near 300 years old." Here Prior met with it; and hence he took it, as the ground-work of his poem "Henry and Emma,"—a poem in which he has drawn out the original thought and grievously impaired the strength and vigour of the rugged old ballad-maker.

Although it was to be found in every edition of Arnold's Chronicle, a book very generally read at the time of its publication, and for a century afterwards, it is remarkable that a composition of so much merit should never have made its way to the stalls of the ballad-monger,—a class of persons, who were, no doubt, sufficiently on the alert to multiply copies of such poems as were, or were likely to be, favourites of the people. It is, at least, clear that evidence of its popularity is not to be obtained from these sources; notwithstanding that there may be, according to a modern annotator, whose authority is "hear-say,"—"in a manuscript of University College, Oxford, a list of books on sale at a stall in that city, in 1520, among which is the 'Not-broon Mayd,' price one-penny;"—and Laneham, in his account of Elizabeth's visit to Kenelworth, mentions the Nut-brown Mayd as a separate book.

No notice is taken of it in the published lists of the old dealers, of which several exist, and a copy of it has not been discovered in any collection. Yet, if it had not been known and admired, somewhat extensively, it certainly would not have been selected, as one likely to be made subservient to the purpose of those who reasoned much as some mistaken persons have done in our own days—that religious lessons might be inculcated by changing, in part the words, and, altogether the sentiment of a popular air; losing sight of the important fact, that it was impossible to remove the associations indissolubly connected with it.

Prior reprinted the ballad, in the edition of his "Poems," 1721, where he states it to have been "written near three hundred years since." "Upon the model" of it, he wrote "Henry and Emma;" his purpose and his moral he intimates, in some introductory lines, "to Chloe:"—

> 'No longer man of woman shall complain,
> That he may love and not be lov'd again;
> That we in vain the fickle sex pursue,
> Who change the constant lover for the new;
> Whatever has been writ, whatever said,
> Of female passion feigned, or faith decay'd;
> Henceforth shall, in my verse, refuted stand,
> Be sent to winds, or writ upon the sand.'

But the mystery that hangs over the old ballad—leaving us uncertain whether the lover were, or were not, justified in trying, by so severe a test, the faith of his mistress—is dispelled in the lengthened and detailed composition of Prior; from the perusal of which the reader rises with a feeling of loathing for the "Henry" and contempt for the "Emma" of the story; sentiments which by no means result from the experiment of "the Knyght" who succeeds in proving of women,

> That they lobe trewe and contynew.



THE NUT BROWN MAYD.

Be it right, or wrong, these men among
On women do complayne
Affermyng this, how that it is
A labour spent in vayne,
To love them wele; for never a dele
They love a man agayne:
For lete a man do what he can,
Theyr favour to attayne,
Yet, yf a newe do them persue,
Theyr first true lover than
Laboureth for nought: and from her thought
He is a banyshed man.

Creswick, del. J Williams sc.



I say not nay, but that all day
It is bothe writ and sayde
That womans faith is, as who sayth,
All utterly decayde;
But, neverthelesse, ryght good wytnèsse
In this case might be layd,
That they love trewe, and contynew:
Recorde the Nut-brown Mayd:
Which, from her love, (when, her to prove,
He cam to make his mone),
Wolde not depart; for in her herte
She loved but hym alone.

Than, betweine us, lete us discusse
What was all the manere
Betwene them two: we wyll also
Tell all the payne, and fere,
That she was in. Now I begyn,
So that ye me answère;
Wherfore, ye, that present be
I pray you, gyve an eare
I am the knyght; I come by nyght,
As secret as I can;
Sayinge, 'Alas! thus standeth the case,
I am a banyshed man.'

'And I your wyll for to fulfyll
In this wyll not refuse;
Trustyinge to shewe, in wordès few,
That men have an ille use
(To theyr own shame) women to blame,
And causelesse them accuse;
Therfore to you I answere nowe,
All women to excuse,—
My owne hart dere, with you what chere?
I pray you, tell anone;
For, in my mynde, of all mankynde
I love but you alone.'

Creswick del. S. Williams, sc.



'It stondeth so; a dede is do
Whereof moche harme shall growe:
My destiny is for to dy.
A shamefull deth, I trowe;
Or ellés to flee: the one must bee.
None other way I knowe,
But to withdrawe as an outlawe,
And take me to my bowe.
Wherfore, adue, my owne hart true!
None other rede I can;
For I must to the grene wode go,
Alone, a banyshed man.'

'O Lord, what is thys worldys blysse,
That changeth as the mone!
My somers day in lusty may
Is derked before the none.
I here you say, farewell: nay, nay,
We dèpart not so sone.
Why say yé so? wheder will ye go?
Alas! what have ye done?
All my welfâre to sorrowe and care
Sholde chaunge, yf ye were gone;
For, in my mynde, of all mankynde
I love but you alone.'

'I can beleve, it shall you greve,
And somewhat you dystrayne;
But, aftyrwarde, your paynes harde
Within a day or twayne
Shall sone aslake; and ye shall take
Comfort to you agayne.
Why sholde ye nought? for, to make thought,
Your labour were in vayne.
And thus I do; and pray you to,
As hartely, as I can;
For I must to the grene wode go,
Alone, a banyshed man.'



'Now, syth that ye have shewed to me
The secret of your mynde,
I shall be playne to you agayne,
Lyke as ye shall me fynde.
Syth it is so, that ye wyll go,
I wolle not leve behynde;
Shall never be sayd, the Nut-brown Mayd
Was to her love unkynde:
Make you redy, for so am I,
Allthough it were anone;
For, in my mynde, of all mankynde
I love but you alone.'

'Yet I you rede to take good hede
What men wyll thynke, and say:
Of yonge and olde it shall be tolde,
That ye be gone away,
Your wanton wyll for to fulfill,
In grene wode you to play;
And that ye myght from your delyght
No lenger make delay.
Rather than ye sholde thus for me
Be called an yll womàn,
Yet wolde I to the grene wode go
Alone, a banyshed man.'

'Though it be songe of old and yonge,
That I sholde be to blame,
Theyrs be the charge, that speke so large
In hurtynge of my name:
For I wyll prove, that faythfulle love
It is devoyd of shame;
In your dystresse, and hevynesse,
To part with you the same:
And sure all tho, that do not so,
True lovers are they none;
For, in my mynde, of all mankynde,
I love but you alone.'



'I councelye you, remember howe,
It is no maydens lawe,
Nothynge to dout, but to renne out,
To wode with an outlàwe:
For ye must there in your hand bere
A bowe, redy to drawe;
And, as a thefe, thus must you lyve,
Ever in drede and awe;
Wherby to you grete harme myght growe:
Yet had I lever than,
That I had to the grene wode go,
Alone, a banyshed man.'

'I thinke not nay, but as ye say,
It is no maydens lore:
But love may make me for your sake,
As ye have sayd before
To come on fote, to hunt, and shote
To gete us mete in store;
For so that I your company
May have, I aske no more:
From which to part, it maketh my hart
As colde as ony stone:
For, in my mynde, of all mankynde
I love but you alone.'

'For an outlawe this is the lawe,
That men hym take and bynde;
Without pytee, hanged to be,
And waver with the wynde.
If I had nede, (as God forbede!)
What rescous coude ye fynde?
Forsoth, I trowe, ye and your bowe
For fere wolde drawe behynde:
And no mervayle; for lytell avayle
Were in your counceyle than:
Wherfore I to the wode will go,
Alone, a banyshed man.'

S Williams, del et sc.



'Right wele knowe ye, that women be
Ful feble for to fyght;
No womanhede is it indede
To be bolde as a knyght:
Yet, in such fere yf that ye were
With enemyes day and nyght,
I wolde withstande, with bowe in hande,
To greve them as I myght,
And you to save; as women have
From deth saved many one:
For, in my mynde, of all mankynde
I love but you alone.'

'Yet take good hede; for ever I drede
That ye coude not sustayne
The thornie wayes, the depe valeies,
The snowe, the frost, the rayne,
The colde, the hete: for, dry or wete,
We must lodge on the playne;
And, us above, none other rofe
But a brake bush, or twayne;
Which sone sholde greve you, I beleve;
And ye wolde gladly than
That I had to the grene wode go,
Alone, a banyshed man.'

'Syth I have here bene partynere
With you of joy and blysse,
I must also parte of your wo
Endure, as reson is:
Yet am I sure of one plesùre;
And, shortely, it is this:
That, where ye be, me semeth, perdè,
I coude not fare amysse.
Without more speche, I you beseche
That we were sone agone;
For, in my mynde, of all mankynde
I love but you alone.'



'If ye go thyder, ye must consyder,
Whan ye have lust to dyne,
There shall no mete be for to gete,
Nor drinke, bere, ale, ne wyne.
No shetés clene, to lye betwene,
Made of threde and twyne;
None other house, but leves and bowes,
To cover your hed and myne.
O myne harte swete, this evyll dyéte
Sholde make you pale and wan;
Wherfore I to the wode will go,
Alone, a banyshed man.'

'Amonge the wylde dere, such an archères,
As men say that ye be,
Ne may not fayle of good vitayle,
Where is so grete plentè:
And water clere of the ryvére
Shall be full swete to me;
With which in hele I shall ryght wele
Endure, as ye shall see;
And, er we go, a bedde or two
I can provyde anone;
For, in my mynde, of all mankynde
I love but you alone.'

'Lo yet, before, ye must do more,
Yf ye wyll go with me:
As cut your here up by your ere;
Your kyrtel by the knee;
With bowe in hande, for to withstande
Your enemyes yf nede be:
And this same nyght before day-lyght,
To wode-warde wyll I fle.
Yf that ye wyll all this fulfill,
Do it shortely as ye can:
Els wyll I to the grene wode go,
Alone, a banyshed man.'



'I shall as nowe do more for you
Than longeth to womanhede;
To short my here, a bowe to bere,
To shote in tyme of nede.
O my sweet mother, before all other
For you I have most drede:
But nowe, adue! I must ensue,
Wher fortune doth me lede.
All this make ye: now let us fle;
The day cometh fast upon;
For, in my mynde, of all mankynde
I love but you alone.'

'Nay, nay, not so; ye shall not go,
And I shall tell ye why,—
Your appetyght is to be lyght
Of love, I wele espy:
For, lyke as ye have sayed to me,
In lyke wyse hardely
Ye wolde answére whosoever it were,
In way of company.
It is sayd of olde, Sone hote, sone colde;
And so is a womàn.
Wherfore I to the wode wyll go,
Alone, a banyshed man.'

'Yf ye take hede, yett is no nede
Such wordes to say by me;
For oft ye prayed, and longe assayed,
Or I you loved, perdè:
And though that I of auncestry
A barons daughter be,
Yet have you proved howe I you loved,
A squyer of lowe degre;
And ever shall, whatso befall;
To yé therfore anone;
For, in my mynde, of all mankynde
I love but you alone.'



'A barons chylde to be begylde!
It were a cursed dede;
To be felàwe with an outlawe!
Almighty God forbede!
Yet beter were, the pore squyère
Alone to forest yede,
Than ye sholde say another day,
That, by my wycked dede,
Ye were betrayd: wherfore, good mayd,
The best rede that I can,
Is, that I to the grene wode go,
Alone, a banyshed man.'

'Whatever befall, I never shall
Of this thyng you upbrayd:
But yf ye go, and leve me so,
Than have ye me betrayd.
Remember wele, howe that ye dele;
For, yf ye, as ye sayd,
Be so unkynde, to leve behynde,
Your love, the Nut-brown Mayd,
Trust me truly, that I shall dy
Sone after ye be gone;
For, in my mynde, of all mankynd
I love but you alone.'

Yf that ye went, ye sholde repent;
For in the forest nowe
I have purvayed me of a mayd,
Whom I love more than you;
Another fayrère, than ever ye were,
I dare it wele avowe;
And of you bothe eche sholde be wrothe
With other, as I trowe:
It were myne ese, to lyve in pese;
So wyll I, yf I can;
Wherfore I to the wode wyll go,
Alone, a banyshed man.'



'Though in the wode I undyrstode
Ye had a paramour,
All this may nought remove my thought,
But that I wyll be your:
And she shall fynde me soft, and kynde
And courteys every hour;
Glad to fulfyll all that she wyll
Commaunde me to my power:
For had ye, lo, an hundred mo,
Of them I wolde be one;
For, in my mynde, of all mankynde
I love but you alone.'

'Myne owne dere love, I se the prove
That ye be kynde and true;
Of mayde, and wyfe, in all my lyfe,
The best that ever I knewe.
Be mery and glad, be no more sad,
The case is chaunged newe;
For it were ruthe, that, for your truthe,
Ye sholde have cause to rewe.
Be not dismayed; whatsoever I sayd
To you, whan I began;
I wyll not to the grene wode go;
I am no banyshed man.'

'These tydings be more gladd to me,
Than to be made a quene,
Yf I were sure they sholde endure:
But it is often sene
Whan men wyll breke promyse, they speke
The wordes on the splene.
Ye shape some wyle me to begyle,
And stele from me, I wene:
Than were the case worse than it was,
And I more wo-begone:
For, in my mynde, of all mankynde
I love but you alone.'



'Ye shall not nede farther to drede;
I wyll not dysparàge
You, (God defend!) syth ye descend
Of so grete a lynàge.
Nowe undyrstande; to Westmarlande,
Which is myne herytage,
I wyll you brynge; and with a rynge
By way of maryage
I wyll you take, and lady make,
As shortely as I can:
Thus have you won an erlys son
And not a banyshed man.'

The reader may be interested in comparing some readings of the old ballad, as printed in Arnold's Chronicle, with those that occur in the "folio MS." of Dr. Percy. In—

Line	9, Arnold's Chron., to them;	Percy, do them.
,,	28, ... they peyne;	 the payne.
,,	50, ... moche;	 grete.
,,	79, ... ought;	 nought.
,,	81, ... loo;	 to.
,,	98, ... whan;	 what.
,,	126, ... to bere and;	 ready to.
,,	136, ... ye;	 I.
,,	137, ... and;	 in.
,,	159, ... ful;	 ryght.
,,	158, ... ful;	 but.
,,	162, ... and;	 or.

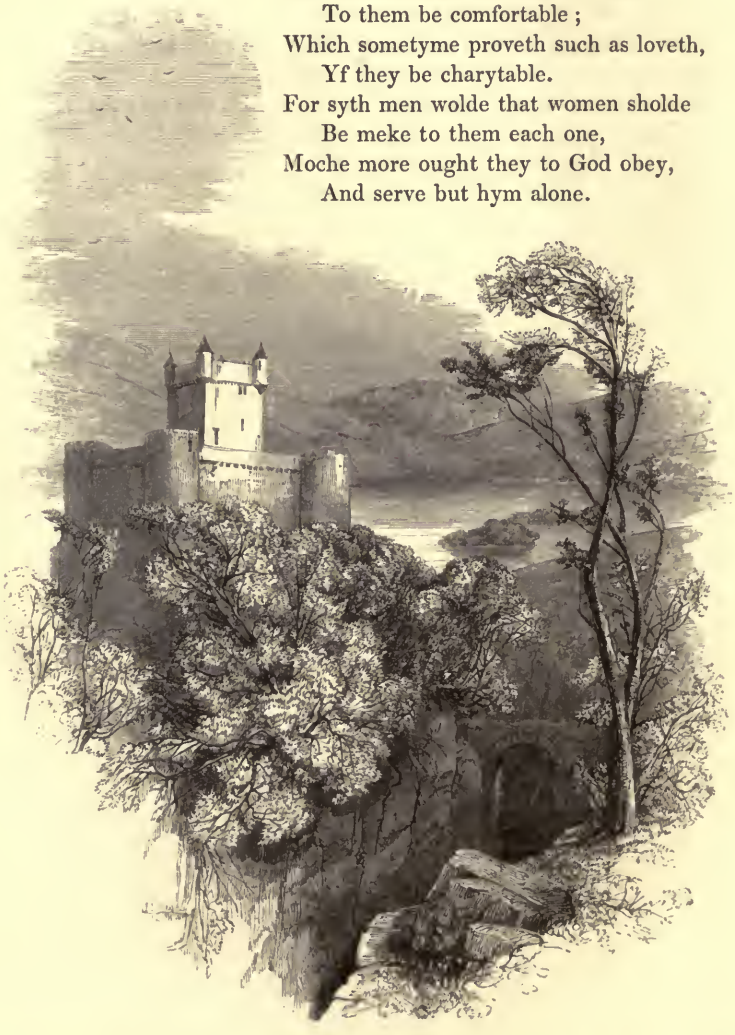
These examples will suffice to shew that very few changes were introduced in the "Reliques." The most important occurs in lines 21 and 22, which Percy prints,—

Which, when her love came, her to prove,
To her to make his mone.

We retain the reading as we find it in Arnold. In the several editions of Arnold, there are also some variations, but none of them are of much importance; they are all given in a small reprint of the ballad, published in 1836, by Mr. Pickering: from one of them, Percy appears to have copied the two lines inserted above. In this reprint, the text is copied from the earliest edition of Arnold, "supposed" to have been printed about 1502; the variations are, chiefly, from the edition of 1521. The orthography varies with the various editions; we have, generally, followed Percy. As an example, we may observe, that in Arnold, the word which occurs so frequently is spelt "bannisshed."

The Nut-Brown Mayd.

Here may ye se, that women be
In love, meke, kynde, and stable:
Late never man reprove them than,
Or call them variable;
But, rather, pray God that we may
To them be comfortable;
Which sometyme proveth such as loveth,
Yf they be charytable.
For syth men wolde that women sholde
Be meke to them each one,
Moche more ought they to God obey,
And serve but hym alone.



Creswick del. J. Williams. sc.

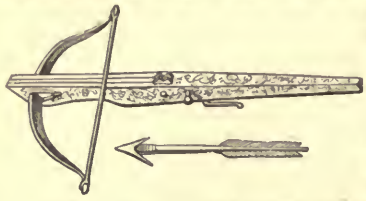
KEMPION. We copy this ballad from the "Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border;" where it is given "chiefly" from "Mrs. Brown's MS." with "corrections from a recited fragment." Sir Walter Scott, in some prefatory remarks, refers to several traditionary anecdotes, still current in Scotland and on the borders, concerning huge and poisonous snakes, or "worms," destroyed by gallant knights in the olden time. The manor of Sockburne, in the bishopric of Durham, is held of the bishop by the service of presenting to him, on his first entrance into his diocese, an antique sword or falchion, to commemorate the slaying of a monstrous creature that devoured men, women, and children,—by Sir John Conyers, who received the manor as a reward for his bravery. Pollard's lands, near Bishop-Auckland, are held by a similar tenure; and the founder of the noble family of Somerville is said to have performed a deed as wonderful—by thrusting down the throat of the snake a burning peat, "bedabbed with pitch, rosett, and brimstone." A rude sculpture carved above the entrance to the ancient church at Linton in Roxburghshire, is said to represent this exploit; of which "the vulgar tell us,"—

> The wode Laird of Lariestoun
> Slew the wode worm of Wormiestoune,
> And wan all Lintoun parochine.

The story of the "Lambton worm," as recorded in Surtees' "History of Durham," is still more remarkable. The heir of Lambton profanely fishing on a sabbath-day, hooked a small worm or elf, which he carelessly threw into a well; in process of time it grew to a huge size, and made prey of the whole country, levying a contribution daily of "nine cows' milk," and, in default of payment, devouring man and beast. The heir, who had wrought the mischief, returning from the crusades, determined to destroy it; and, by the advice of a witch, or wise woman, clad himself in a coat of mail studded with razor blades; selecting as the scene of battle the middle of a river, so that as fast as the worm was cut to pieces the stream carried away the dissevered parts, and thus prevented their subsequent adhesion. The knight had promised, however, that he would slay the first living thing that met him after his victory; this chanced to be his father, and, as he refused to keep his vow, it was decreed that no chief of his family should die in his bed for nine generations. Popular tradition continues, to point out the scene of the encounter. Stories of men and women transformed into monsters are sufficiently numerous, and have been found among every people. Many such exist in England, in Scotland, and in Ireland; in the latter country they are invariably supposed to occupy lakes of unfathomed depth, out of which they occasionally arise and make excursions among adjacent mountains, bearing with them to their "palaces" beneath the waters, the cattle of some unhappy "neighbour," and not unfrequently the neighbour himself. The origin of the superstition is believed to have been Danish. The traditions of Denmark are full of such romances; and it is more than probable, that it may have been introduced, by its sea-kings, into these islands.

"The ballad of Kempion," writes Sir Walter Scott, "seems, from the names of the personages and the nature of the adventure, to have been an old metrical romance

degraded into a ballad by the lapse of time and the corruption of reciters." The allusion to the "arblast bow" would seem to affix the composition to a remote date.* Two ballads which relate to a similar incident have been preserved; one entitled "Kemp Owyne," by Mr. Motherwell, and another "The Laidly Worm of Spindleston-Heugh," affirmed to have been composed, in 1270, by Duncan Frazier, "living on Cheviot," but supposed to have been, at least re-written, by Mr. Robert Lambe, vicar of Norham. In "Kemp Owyne," 'dove Isabel,' is transformed into a monster by her step-mother, and doomed to retain her savage form—



Till Kemp Owyne come ower the sea
And borrow her with kisses three.

The three kisses are of course given; when, instead of the beast "whose breath was strang, whose hair was lang,"—

Her breath was sweet, her hair grew short,
And twisted nane about the tree;
And, smilingly, she came about,
As fair a woman as fair could be.

The ballad of the "Laidley (loathsome) Worm," was no doubt greatly altered by Mr. Lambe, but there is evidence that the story was "generally known in Northumberland" long before he printed the version attributed to Duncan Frazier; and it is to be regretted that he did not communicate it as he received it—stript of its "amendments and enlargements." In this ballad, the daughter of the King of Bamborough is metamorphosed by her step-mother, and restored to her natural shape by her brother "Childy Wynd," who avenges the wrong done to his sister by converting the foul witch into a toad. As in "Kempion," and "Kemp Owyne," the restoration to humanity is effected by "kisses three:"—

'O, quit thy sword and bend thy bow,
And give me kisses three;
For though I am a poisonous worm,
No hurt I'll do to thee.

O, quit thy sword and bend thy bow,
And give me kisses three;
If I'm not won, ere the sun goes down,
Won I shall never be.'

He quitted his sword and bent his bow,
And gave her kisses three;
She crept into a hole a worm,
But out stept a lady.

Percy prints the ballad of the "Witch of Wokey," written in 1748, by the ingenious Dr. Harrington of Bath. She "blasted every plant around;" and was encountered, not by a knight, but by a "lerned wight," who having chauntede out a goodlie booke, and sprinkled, plentifully, holy water,—

Lo, where stood a hag before,
Now stood a ghastly stone!

* The arbalast and arrow here engraved, are copied from specimens of the time of Elizabeth, in the possession of Sir Samuel Meyrick, at Goodrich Court, and have been engraved in Skelton's "Illustrations of Ancient Arms and Armour." The string of the arbalast, or arbalist, was drawn to the notch in the centre by means of a wheel, which was usually hung to the girdle of the archer.



KEMPION.

'Cum heir, cum heir, ye freely fee'd,
And lay your head low on my knee
The heaviest weird I will you read,
That ever was read to gay ladye.

O meikle dolour sall ye dree,
And aye the salt seas o'er ye 'se swim;
And far mair dolour sall ye dree
On Estmere crags, when ye them climb.

Scott, del. Linton, sc.



I weird ye to a fiery beast,
And relieved sall ye never be,
Till Kempion, the kingis son,
Cum to the crag, and thrice kiss thee.'—

O meikle dolour did she dree,
And aye the salt seas o'er she swam;
And far mair dolour did she dree
On Estmere crags, when she them clamb:

And aye she cried for Kempion,
Gin he would but come to her hand.
Now word has gane to Kempion,
That sicken a beast was in his land.

'Now, by my sooth,' said Kempion,
'This fiery beast I 'll gang and see.'—
'And by my sooth,' said Segramour,
'My ae brother, I 'll gang wi' thee.'

Then bigged hae they a bonny boat,
And they hae set her to the sea;
But a mile before they reached the shore,
Around them she gared the red fire flee.

'O Segramour, keep the boat afloat,
And let her na the land o'er near;
For this wicked beast will sure gae mad,
And set fire to a' the land and mair.'—

Syne has he bent an arblast bow,
And aimed an arrow at her head;
And swore if she didna quit the land,
Wi' that same shaft to shoot her dead.

'O out of my stythe I winna rise,
(And it is not for the awe o' thee,)
Till Kempion, the kingis son,
Cum to the crag, and thrice kiss me.'—



He has louted him o'er the dizzy crag,
And gien the monster kisses ane;
Awa she gaed, and again she cam,
The fieryest beast that ever was seen.

'O out o' my stythe I winna rise,
(And not for a' thy bow nor thee,)
Till Kempion, the kingis son,
Cum to the crag, and thrice kiss me.'—

He 's louted him o'er the Estmere crag,
And he has gi'en her kisses twa:
Awa she gaed, and again she cam,
The fieryest beast that ever you saw.

'O out of my den I winna rise,
Nor flee it for the fear o' thee,
Till Kempion, that courteous knight,
Cum to the crag, and thrice kiss me.'—

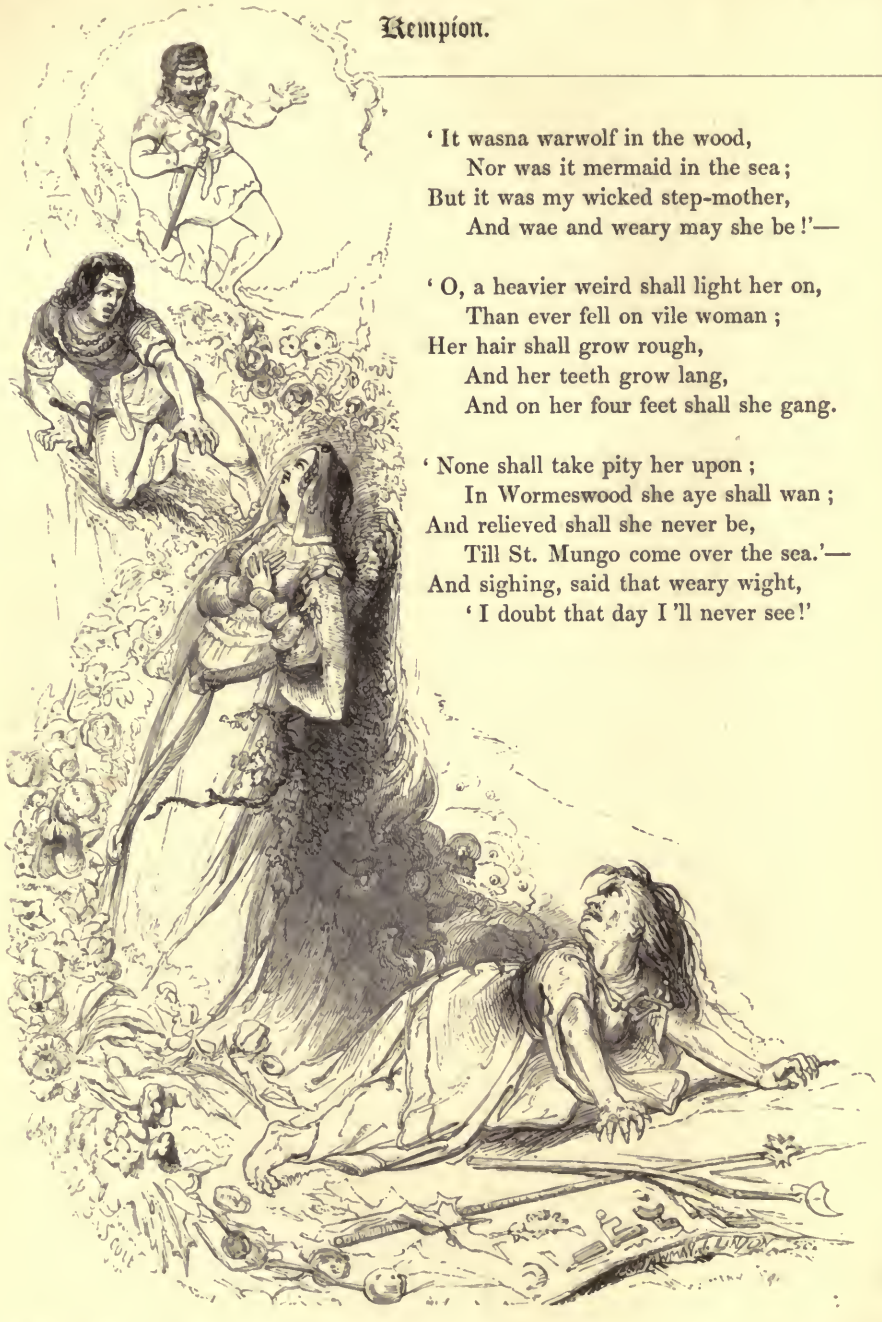
He 's louted him o'er the lofty crag,
And he has gi'en her kisses three:
Awa she gaed, and again she cam,
The loveliest ladye e'er could be!

'And by my sooth,' says Kempion,
'My ain true love, (for this is she.)
They surely had a heart o' stane,
Could put thee to such misery.

O was it warwolf* in the wood?
Or was it mermaid in the sea?
Or was it man or vile woman,
My ain true love, that mis-shaped thee?'—

* Warwolf signifies a magician, possessing the power of transforming himself into a wolf, for the purpose of ravage and destruction.

Kempion.



'It wasna warwolf in the wood,
Nor was it mermaid in the sea;
But it was my wicked step-mother,
And wae and weary may she be!'—

'O, a heavier weird shall light her on,
Than ever fell on vile woman;
Her hair shall grow rough,
And her teeth grow lang,
And on her four feet shall she gang.

'None shall take pity her upon;
In Wormeswood she aye shall wan;
And relieved shall she never be,
Till St. Mungo come over the sea.'—
And sighing, said that weary wight,
'I doubt that day I 'll never see!'

Scott, del

Linton, sc.

THE CHILD OF ELLE. This beautiful and interesting ballad was originally published by Dr. Percy in the "Reliques of Ancient English Poetry." He describes it as "given from a fragment" in his folio manuscript; where, although "extremely defective and mutilated, it appeared to have so much merit, that it excited a strong desire to attempt a completion of the story." The accomplished editor adds, that "the reader will easily discover the supplemental stanzas by their inferiority, and, at the same time, be inclined to pardon it, when he considers how difficult it must be to imitate the affecting simplicity and artless beauty of the original." He supplies us with no farther information on the subject—except that the term "Child" was a title sometimes given to a knight, and that the word "kirke," which occurs towards the close of the ballad, is not sufficient to justify us in describing it as "Scottish, which it hath been thought to be," —inasmuch as it was "among his own additions;" and, moreover, that "in the northern counties of England, kirk is used in the common dialect for church, as well as beyond the Tweed." The extent of the "emendations" we can therefore only guess at; but there is little doubt that they were extensive and numerous; probably the "manuscript" furnished him with but a mere outline of the story; and that the ballad may, in reality, be considered as the composition of Dr. Percy.* A less questionable proof of its Scottish origin is, however, derived from the fact that many poems, unquestionably Scotch, relate a similar incident—although in most of them "the course of true love" is made to run less smooth, ending in the deaths of the hapless lovers. Thus, in "The Douglas Tragedy,"—of which there exist two versions, one given by Sir Walter Scott, the other by Mr. Motherwell, and of which "many corrupted copies are current among the vulgar."—The following stanzas are from the ballad as given by Sir Walter Scott:—

'Light down, light down, Lady Marg'ret,' he said,
'And hold my steed in your hand,
Until that against your seven brethren bold
And your father I make a stand.'

She held his steed in her milk-white hand,
And never shed one tear,
Until that she saw her seven brethren fa'
And her father hard fighting who loved her so dear.

'Oh, hold your hand, Lord William,' she said,
'For your strokes they are wondrous sair:
True lovers I can get many a ane,
But a father I can never get mair.'

O she 's ta'en out her handkerchief,
It was o' the holland sae fine,
And aye she dighted her father's bloody wounds,
That were redder than the wine.

'O chuse, O chuse, Lady Marg'ret,' he said,
'O, whether will ye gang or bide?'—
'I 'll gang, I 'll gang, Lord William,' she said,
'For you have left me no other guide.'

He 's lifted her on a milk-white steed,
And himself on a dapple gray,
With a bugelet horn hung down by his side,
And slowly they baith rode away.
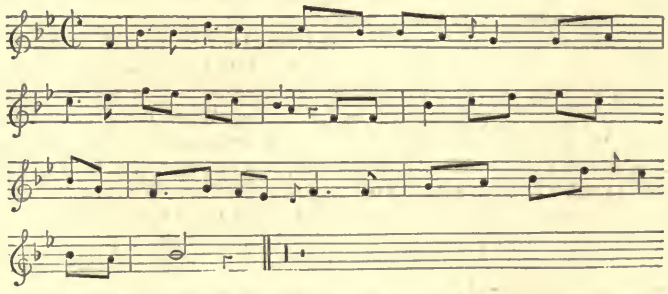
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* "In the fourth edition of Percy's Reliques," says Sir Walter Scott (Introductory Remarks on Popular Poetry), "there is given a copy of that elegant metrical tale, 'The Child of Elle,' as it exists in the folio manuscript, which goes far to shew it has derived all its beauties from Dr. Percy's poetical powers." In this, however, there must be some mistake, as nothing of the kind appears in the fourth, or in any other edition, of the "Reliques."

Lord William was dead lang ere midnight,
Lady Marg'ret lang ere the day,
And all true lovers that go together
May they have mair luck than they!

The scene of this tragedy is pointed out in the traditions of the peasantry. From the ancient tower of "Blackhouse, in Selkirkshire," Lady Margaret is said to have been carried; seven large stones, upon the neighbouring height, are shewn as "marking the place where the seven brothers were slain;" an adjoining burn is averred to have been the stream "at which the lovers stopped to drink,"—

The spring that ran so clear;

And the chapel of St. Mary, referred to in the ballad, is believed to have been actually the burial place of Lord William and fair Margaret;—"so minute is tradition in ascertaining the scene of a tragical tale, which, considering the rude state of former times, had, probably, foundation in some real event." Sir Walter Scott has supplied the air to which this old ballad was sung:—



The ballad, as obtained by Mr. Motherwell, supplies a few "unimportant variations," which are not improvements,—such as this:

'O hold my horse, Lady Marg'ret,' he said,
'O hold my horse by the bonny bridle rein;
Till I fight your father and seven bold brethren,
As they come riding down the glen.'

The "bugelet horn" is referred to in these ballads; our readers may be interested in seeing a copy of one of the useful and ornamental accessaries of the chieftains in old times; we have therefore engraved an example; and preferred to others, this,—which was for so long a period a cherished treasure of Strawberry Hill. There is, however, no authentic history attached to it, although, from its remarkable beauty, it must have been the property of some important personage, and have been considered a rare acquisition.





THE CHILD OF ELLE.

On yonder hill a castle standes
With walles and towres bedight,
And yonder lives the Child of Elle,
A younge and comely knighte.

The Child of Elle to his garden went,
And stood at his garden, pale,
Whan, lo! he beheld fair Emmelines page
Come trippinge downe the dale.

Franklin, del.

T. Williams. sc.

The Child of Elle.



The Child of Elle he hyed him thence,
Y-wis he stoode not stille,
And soone he mette faire Emmelines page
Come climbing up the hille.

'Nowe Christe thee save, thou little foot-page,
Nowe Christe thee save and see!
Oh, tell me how does thy ladye gaye,
And what may thy tydinges bee?'

'My lady she is all woe-begone,
And the teares they falle from her eyne;
And aye she laments the deadlye feude
Betweene her house and thine.

And here shee sends thee a silken scarfe
Bedewde with many a teare,
And biddes thee sometimes thinke on her,
Who loved thee so deare.

And here she sends thee a ring of golde
The last boone thou mayst have,
And biddes thee weare it for her sake,
Whan she is layd in grave.

For, ah! her gentle heart is broke,
And in grave soone must shee bee.
Sith her father hath chose her a new new love,
And forbidde her to think of thee.

Her father hath brought her a carlish knighte,
Sir John of the north countràye,
And within three dayes shee must him wedde,
Or he vowes he will her slaye.'

'Nowe hye thee backe, thou little foot-page,
And greet thy ladye from mee,
And tell her that I, her owne true love
Will dye, or sette her free.

The Child of Elle.



Nowe hye thee backe, thou little foot-page,
And let thy fair ladye know
This night will I bee at her bowre windòwe,
Betide me weale or woe.'

The boye he tripped, the boye he ranne,
He neither stint ne stayd
Until he came to fair Emmelines bowre,
Whan kneeling downe he sayd,

'O ladye, I've been with thy own true love,
And he greets thee well by mee;
This night will he be at thy bowre-windòwe,
And dye or sette thee free.'

Nowe day was gone and night was come,
And all were fast asleepe,
All save the ladye Emmeline,
Who sate in her bowre to weepe:

And soone shee heard her true loves voice
Lowe whispering at the walle,
'Awake, awake, my deare ladyè,
Tis I thy true love call.

Awake, awake, my ladye deare,
Come, mount this faire palfràye
This ladder of ropes will lette thee downe,
Ile carrye thee hence awaye.'

'Nowe nay, nowe nay, thou gentle knighte,
Nowe nay, this may not bee;
For aye should I tint my maiden fame,
If alone I should wend with thee.'

'O ladye, thou with a knighte so true
Mayst safelye wend alone,
To my ladye mother I will thee bringe,
Where marriage shall make us one.'



'My father he is a baron bolde,
Of lynage proude and hye;
And what would he saye if his daughter
Awaye with a knighte should fly?

Ah! well I wot, he never would rest,
Nor his meate should do him no goode,
Until he had slain thee, Child of Elle,
And seene thy deare hearts bloode.'

'O ladye, wert thou in thy saddle sette,
And a little space him fro,
I would not care for thy cruel fathèr,
Nor the worst that he could doe.

O ladye, wert thou in thy saddle sette,
And once without this walle,
I would not care for thy cruel fathèr,
Nor the worst that might befalle.'

Faire Emmeline sighed, fair Emmeline wept,
And aye her heart was woe:
At length he seized her lilly-white hand,
And downe the ladder he drewe:

And thrice he clasped her to his breste,
And kist her tenderlìe:
The teares that fell from her fair eyes
Ranne like the fountayne free.

Hee mounted himselfe on his stede so talle,
And her on a fair palfràye,
And slung his bugle about his necke,
And roundlye they rode awaye.

All this beheard her owne damsèlle,
In her bed whereas shee ley,
Quoth shee, 'My lord shall knowe of this,
Soe I shall have golde and fee.

The Child of Elle.



Awake, awake, thou baron bolde!
Awake, my noble dame!
Your daughter is fledde with the Child of Elle
To doe the deede of shame.'

The baron he woke, the baron he rose,
And called his merrye men all:
'And come thou forth, Sir John the knighte,
Thy ladye is carried to thrall.'

Faire Emmeline scant had ridden a mile
A mile forth of the towne,
When she was aware of her fathers men
Come galloping over the downe:

And formost came the carlish knighte,
Sir John of the north countràye:
'Nowe stop, nowe stop, thou false traitòure,
Nor carry that ladye awaye.

For she is come of hye linèage,
And was of a ladye born,
And ill it beseems thee—a false churls sonne
To carry her hence to scorne.'

'Nowe loud thou lyest, Sir John the knighte,
Nowe thou doest lye of mee;
A knighte me bred, and a ladye me bore,
Soe never did none by thee.

But light nowe downe, my ladye faire,
Light downe, and hold my steed;
While I and this discourteous knighte
Doe try this arduous deede.

But light nowe downe, my deare ladyè,
Light downe, and hold my horse;
While I and this discourteous knighte
Doe trye our valours force.'

The Child of Elle.



Fair Emmeline sighed, fair Emmeline wept,
And aye her heart was woe,
While twixt her love and the carlish knighte
Past many a baneful blowe.

The Child of Elle hee fought soe well,
As his weapon he waved amaine,
That soone he had slaine the carlish knighte,
And layd him upon the plaine.

And nowe the baron and all his men
Full fast approached nye:
Ah, what may ladye Emmeline doe!
Twere nowe no boote to flye.

Her lover he put his horne to his mouth,
And blew both loud and shrill,
And soone he saw his owne merry men
Come ryding over the hill.

'Nowe hold thy hand, thou bold barón,
I pray thee hold thy hand,
Nor ruthless rend two gentle hearts
Fast knit in true loves band.

Thy daughter I have dearly loved
Full long and many a day;
But with such love as holy kirke
Hath freelye said wee may.

O give consent, shee may be mine,
And bless a faithfull paire:
My lands and livings are not small,
My house and lineage faire:

My mother she was an earls daughtèr,
And a noble knighte my sire:'—
The baron he frowned and turn'd away
With mickle dole and ire.

The Child of Elle.



Fair Emmeline sighed, faire Emmeline wept,
And did all tremblinge stand:
At length she sprang upon her knee,
And held his lifted hand.

'Pardon, my lorde and father deare,
This faire younge knighte and mee:
Trust me, but for the carlish knighte,
I never had fled from thee.

Oft have you called your Emmeline
Your darling and your joye;
O! let not then your harsh resolves
Your Emmeline destroye.'

The baron he stroakt his dark-brown cheeke,
And turned his heade asyde
To wipe awaye the starting teare
He proudly strave to hyde.

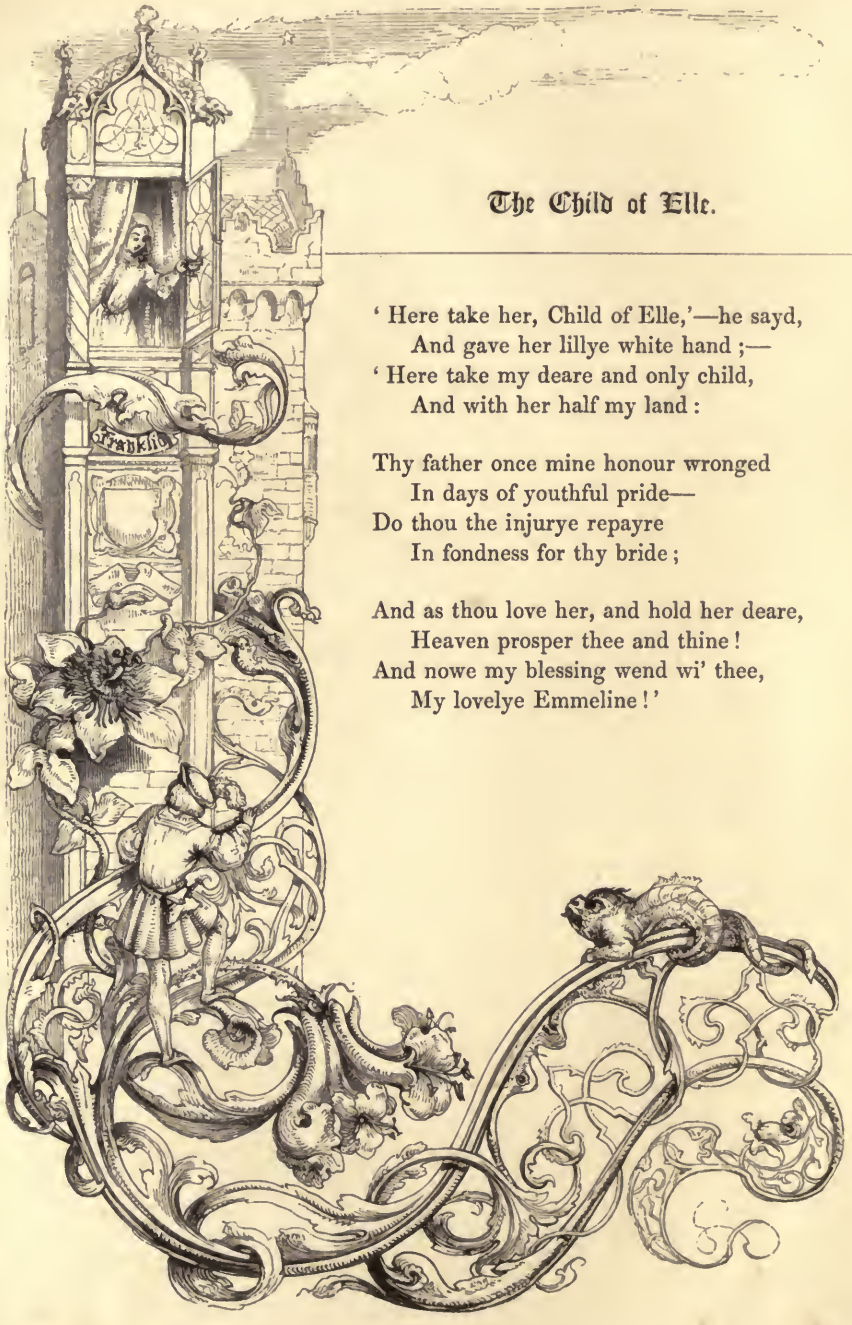
In deepe revolving thought he stoode,
And mused a little space:
Then raised faire Emmeline from the grounde,
With many a fond embrace.

* In the Scottish ballads, as we have intimated, the affair has a far less happy termination; the lover dying of his wounds, and the Lady Margaret of a broken heart:—

Lord William was buried in St. Maries kirk,
Lady Marg'ret in Maries quire;
Out of the ladys grave grew a bonny red rose,
And out of the knights a brier.

And they twa met, and they twa plat,
And fain they wad be near;
And a' the warld might ken right weel,
They were twa lovers dear.

But bye and rade the Black Douglas,
And wow but he was rough!
For he pulled up the bonny brier,
And flang'd in St. Maries loch.



The Child of Elle.

‘ Here take her, Child of Elle,’—he sayd,
And gave her lillye white hand ;—
‘ Here take my deare and only child,
And with her half my land :

Thy father once mine honour wronged
In days of youthful pride—
Do thou the injurye repayre
In fondness for thy bride ;

And as thou love her, and hold her deare,
Heaven prosper thee and thine !
And nowe my blessing wend wi’ thee,
My lovelye Emmeline ! ’

Franklin, del. T Williams, sc.

THE TWA BROTHERS. We copy this pathetic ballad from "Motherwell's Minstrelsy, Ancient and Modern." He inclines to trace its origin to a melancholy event that happened in the family of the Somervilles, which is thus recorded:—"This year, 1589, in the moneth of July, ther falls out a sad accident, as a further warning that God was displeased with the familie. * * * * * The servant, with his two sones, William, Master of Somervil, and John, his brother, went with the horses to ane shott of land, called the prety shott, directly opposite the front of the house, where there was some meadow ground for grassing the horses, and willowes to shaddow themselves from the heat. They had not long continued in this place, when the Master of Somervil, after some litle rest awakeing from his sleep, and finding his pistolles, that lay hard by him, wett with the dew, he began to rub and dry them, when, unhappily, one of them went off the ratch, being lying upon his knee, and the muzel turned side-ways, the ball strocke his brother John directly in the head and killed him outright, soe that his sorrowful brother never had one word from him, albeit he begged it with many teares."

In this, or some such unhappy incident, no doubt the ballad originated. A copy, different from that preserved by Mr. Motherwell, was published in the "Popular Ballads and Songs" collected by Jamieson, who states that he "took it down from the recitation of Mrs. Arrott;" but finding the third stanza imperfect, he added to it four lines, which give a reading to the story, out of harmony with truth. His added lines are—

And nane was near to part the strife
That raise atween them tway,
Till out and Willie 's drawn the sword,
And did his brother slay.

In Jamieson's version, it is not the mother who discovers the blood of the dead upon the brow of the living brother, but a "true love," who exclaims—

'When every lady looks for her love,
I ne'er need look for mine.'

And in this ballad the dying youth thus addresses his unhappy brother, who had been vainly striving to "stop his bluidy wounds:"—

'Ye'll lift me up upon your back,
Tak me to Kirkland fair;
Ye'll mak my greaf baith braid and lang,
And lay my body there.

Ye'll lay my arrows at my head,
My bent bow at my feet;
My sword and buckler at my side,
As I was wont to sleep.

When ye gae hame to your father,
He'll speer for his son John:—
Say, ye left him unto Kirkland fair,
Learning the school alone.

When ye gae hame to my sister,
She'll speer for her brother John;
Ye'll say ye left him in Kirkland fair,
The green grass growing aboon.

Whan ye gae hame to my true love,
She 'll speer for her Lord John;—
Ye 'll say ye left him in Kirkland fair,
But hame ye fear he 'll never come.'

The version furnished by Mr. Motherwell is far more touching and more true; and preserves the ballad from injury in its most prominent and impressive features:—the sorrow and remorse of the wretched survivor, and the generous and forgiving spirit of the youth who, in his dying agony, thinks only of screening the reputation of his brother. In the "Reliques of Ancient English Poetry," there occurs a ballad, entitled "Edward," which contains the same general characteristics,—here, however, when the mother enquires of the son—

"Quhy dois zour brand sae drap wi' bluid?"

She receives for answer, as in the ballad of the "Twa Brothers," that the stain is from the blood of his "hauke sae guid," and from his "reid-roan steid;" but, subsequently, the confession that he had "killed his fadir deir." The following verse concludes the ballad, and explains the catastrophe:

'And guhat wul ze lelve to zour ain mither deir,
My deir son, now tell me, O?'
'The curse of hell frae me sall ye beir,
Mither, mither!
The curse of hell frae me sall ze beir,
Sic counzeils ze gave to me, O!'

It would appear, from a note in the seventh edition of the "Reliques," that this "curious song" was transmitted, in M.S., to Dr. Percy, by Sir David Dalrymple, Bart., late Lord Hailes. In Herd's collection of "Ancient and Modern Scottish Songs and Heroic Ballads," 1769—the ballad is reprinted, but without any remark. He prints also another ballad (but neither in this case does he supply us with any information concerning it),—in which a lady, about to marry without the consent of her brother, is murdered by him with "a little penknife."

Motherwell prints also a ballad, entitled "Son Davie, Son Davie," which somewhat resembles that of the "Twa Brothers," but more closely that of Dr. Percy. We extract the concluding verse:—

'What wilt thou leave to thy mother dear,
Son Davie, son Davie?'
'A fire o' coals to burn her wi' hearty cheer,
And she 'll never get mair o' me, O!'



This engraving of the ancient Scottish dirk is copied from one in Logan's "Scottish Gael," there stated to be in the possession of the author. The handle is elaborately carved with an interlaced pattern, after the style of the ancient "Runic Knot." The sheath contains pouches to hold two smaller knives.





THE TWA BROTHERS.

THERE were twa brothers at the scule,
And when they got awa'—
It 's 'Will ye play at the stane-chucking,
Or will ye play at the ba',
Or will ye gae up to yon hill head?
And there we 'll warsell a fa'.'

'I winna play at the stane-chucking,
Nor will I play at the ba',
But I 'll gae up to yon bonnie green hill,
And there we 'll warsell a fa'.'

Frith, del. Bastin, sc.



They warsled up, they warsled down,
Till John fell to the ground;
A dirk fell out of Williams pouch,
And gave John a deadly wound.

'O lift me up upon your back,
Tak me to yon well fair;
And wash my bluidy wounds o'er and o'er,
And they 'll ne'er bleed nae mair.'

He 's lifted his brother upon his back,
Ta'en him to yon well fair;
He 's washed his bluidy wounds o'er and o'er,
But they bleed ay mair and mair.

'Tak ye aff my Holland sark,
And rive it gair by gair,
And row it in my bluidy wounds,
And they 'll ne'er bleed nae mair.'

He 's taken aff his Holland sark,
And torn it gair by gair;
He 's row it in his bluidy wounds,
But they bleed ay mair and mair.

'Tak now aff my green sleiding,
And row me saftly in;
And tak me up to yon kirk style,
Whare the grass grows fair and green.'

He 's taken aff the green sleiding,
And rowed him softly in;
He 's laid him down by yon kirk style,
Whare the grass grows fair and green.



'What will ye say to your father dear,
When ye gae hame at e'en?'
'I'll say ye're lying at yon kirk style,
Whare the grass grows fair and green.'

'O no, O no, my brother dear,
O you must not say so;
But say, that I'm gane to a foreign land,
Whare nae man does me know.'

When he sat in his fathers chair
He grew baith pale and wan.
'O what blude's that upon your brow?
O dear son, tell to me.'

'It is the blude o' my gude gray steed—
He wadna ride wi' me.'
'O thy steeds blude was ne'er sae red,
Nor e'er sae dear to me.

O what blude's that upon your cheek?
O dear son, tell to me.'
'It is the blude of my greyhound,
He wadna hunt for me.'

'O thy hounds blude was ne'er sae red,
Nor e'er sae dear to me;
O what blude's this upon your hand?
O dear son, tell to me.'

'It is the blude of my gay goss hawk
He wadna flee for me.'
'O thy hawks blude was ne'er sae red,
Nor e'er sae dear to me;

The Twa Brothers.



O what blude 's this upon your dirk?
Dear Willie, tell to me.'
' It is the blude of my ae brother,
O, dule and wae is me!'

' O what will ye say to your father?
Dear Willie, tell to me.'
' I 'll saddle my steed, and awa I 'll ride,
To dwell in some far countrie.'

' O when will ye come hame again?
Dear Willie, tell to me.'
' When sun and mune leap on yon hill,
And that will never be.'

She turned hersel' right round about,
And her heart burst into three:
' My ae best son is deid and gane,
And my tother ane I 'll ne'er see.'



Frith, del. Bastin, sc.

THE BEGGAR'S DAUGHTER OF BEDNALL GREEN.

We take this fine and touching old ballad from the "Reliques" of Dr. Percy, although a black-letter copy of it is preserved in the folio collection at the British Museum; retaining it chiefly because the Doctor has added, at the close, several stanzas in lieu of those which are found in the early edition; admitting, therefore, the cogency of his reasons for the change he has introduced. He does not give these stanzas as genuine, but "as a modern attempt to remove the absurdities and inconsistencies which so remarkably prevailed" in the ancient version of the story—thus "rendering it much more affecting," and "reconciling it to probability and true history." The verses displaced by Percy we also insert. We find, however, many differences between the two copies; although none of them, except the extensive one referred to, are very essential. As that in the British Museum contains several passages which Percy may have altered, but which we do not think he has improved, we have restored them in the majority of cases in which they occur.*

'When first our King his fame did advance,
And fought for his title in delicate France,
In many places great peril past he;
But then was not born my pretty Bessee.

And in those wars went over to fight
Many a brave duke, a lord, and a knighte;
And with them young Montford of courage so free;
But then was not born my pretty Bessee.

And there did young Montford, with a blow o' the face,
Lose both his eyes in a very short space;
His life also had been gone with his sight,
Had not a young woman come forth i' the night.

Amongst the slaine men her fancy did move,
To search and to seek out her owne true love;
Who seeing young Montford there gasping to lie,
She saved his life through her charitie.

And then all our victuals in beggars attire,
At the hands of good people we there did require;
At last into England, as now it is seene,
We came and remained at Bednal Green.

And thus have we lived in fortunes despight,
Though poore, yet contented, with humble delight;
And in my old age, a comfort to be,
God sent me a daughter called pretty Bessee.

* A few of these alterations it may be desirable to note. We have no means of ascertaining whether the Black-letter copy in the British Museum was, or was not, one of "the two ancient copies" consulted by Percy. It will be seen, however, that the reprint of Percy very closely resembles it; for the following are the principal changes which occur in his version of the ballad. In the 7th verse, Percy has the word "enamoured" instead of "in love with;" in verse 13, "That soon I shall dye for pretty Bessee," instead of "Then grant me thy favour, my pretty Bessee;" in verse 14, "as fine as a ladye," instead of "in silks and in velvets:" in verse 51, "the pearlie drops standing within her faire eyes," instead of "with the faire water all in her bright eyes."

And thus, you nobles, my song I do end,
Hoping the same no man doth offend;
Full forty long winters thus have I been
A silly blind beggar of Bednal green.

Now when the company had every one,
Heard the strange tale in song he had shown,
They were all amazed, as well they might be,
Both at the blind beggar and pretty Bessee.

The ballad in the British Museum is thus entitled—"The Rarest Ballad that ever was seen of the Blind Beggar's daughter of Bednal Green. Printed by and for W. Onley; and are to be sold by C. Bates at the sign of the sun and bible in Pye corner." The Pepysian Library does not contain a copy; but Dr. Percy found one in his "folio MS.," which he "compared with two ancient printed copies." He considers it to have been written in the reign of Elizabeth; on the ground that, in verse the twenty-third, the arms of England are called "the Queenes armes;"* and, also, because of the "tune's being quoted in other old pieces written in her time;" History informs us that at the decisive battle of Evesham (fought August 4, 1265), when Simon de Montfort, the great Earl of Leicester, was slain at the head of the barons, his eldest son, Henry, fell by his side, and, in consequence of that defeat, his whole family sunk for ever, the King bestowing their great honours and possessions on his second son, Edmund, Earl of Lancaster. We have, however, no data from whence to determine whether the story of the Blind Beggar is pure fiction or founded on fact. It is by no means improbable that some such incident did actually occur, of which the poet took advantage, availing himself of the usual, and justifiable, licence. During the civil wars, events of this kind must have been frequent.



The "Angell," more than once alluded to in the ballad, was a gold coin, value about ten shillings; so called from having on one side a figure of St. Michael killing the dragon. They were first coined by Edward the Fourth, in 1466, and continued to be struck until the reign of Charles the First. The reverse exhibits a ship bearing the arms of England.



* The Arms of Elizabeth differ from the Royal Arms, as now borne, in many particulars. *France* and England only appear in the quarterings of the shield. The removal of the French Coat did not indeed take place till late in the reign of George III., although, centuries before, we had lost every foot of our French territories,—so long retained and so obstinately fought for by our earlier sovereigns. The Red Dragon and Lion are the supporters. The Dragon being the distinctive badge of the Tudor family, it was introduced by the victorious Henry of Richmond, on his accession to the throne, after the battle of Bosworth. Richard III. had two Boars as his supporters; hence the allusion, in Shakspere, to "Richard, that bloody and revengeful boar." From the accession of Henry VII. until the death of Elizabeth, the Arms of England remained the same. It was James I. who introduced the Unicorn, the badge of his house, which has ever since retained its place with the Lion, as the supporters of the Royal Arms.



THE BEGGAR'S DAUGHTER OF BEDNALL GREEN.

PART THE FIRST.

Itt was a blind beggar, had long lost his sight,
He had a faire daughter most pleasant and bright:
And many a gallant brave suitor had shee,
For none was soe comelye as pretty Bessee.

And though shee was of favor most faire,
Yett seeing she was but a poor beggars heyre
Of ancyent housekeepers despised was shee,
Whose sonnes came as suitors to prettye Bessee.

Gilbert, del. Vizetelly, sc.





Wherefore in great sorrow faire Bessee did say,
'Good father, and mother, let me goe away
To seeke out my fortune, whereever itt bee.'
The suite then they granted to pretty Bessee.

Then Bessee, that was of bewtye soe bright,
All cladd in gray russett, and late in the night,
From father and mother alone parted shee;
Who sighed and sobbed for pretty Bessee.

Shee went till shee came to Stratford-le-Bow;
Then knew shee not whither, nor which way to goe:
With teares shee lamented her hard destinie,
So sadd and soe heavy was pretty Bessee.

Shee kept on her journey untill it was day,
And went unto Rumford along the hye way;
Where at the Queenes armes entertained was shee:
So faire and wel favoured was pretty Bessee.

Shee had not been there one month to an end,
But master and mistress and all was her friend:
And every brave gallant, that once did her see,
Was strait-way in love with pretty Bessee.

Great gifts they did send her of silver and gold,
And in their songs daylye her love was extold;
Her bewtye was blazed in every degree;
Soe faire and soe comelye was pretty Bessee.

The younge men of Rumford in her had their joy;
Shee shew'd herself curteous, but never too coye;
And at their commandment still wold she bee;
Soe fayre and soe comlye was pretty Bessee.

Foure suitors att once unto her did goe;
They craved her favor, but still she sayd 'Noe;
I would not wish gentles to marry with mee.'
Yett ever they honored pretty Bessee.



The first of them was a gallant young knight,
And he came unto her disguisde in the night:
The second a gentleman of good degree,
Who wooed and sued for pretty Bessee.

A merchant of London, whose wealth was not small,
Was then the third suitor, and proper withall:
Her masters own sonne the fourth man must bee,
Who swore he would dye for pretty Bessee.

'And, if thou wilt marry with mee,' quoth the knight,
'Ile make thee a lady with joy and delight;
My heart's so inthralled by thy faire bewtie,
Then grant me thy favour, my pretty Bessee.'

The gentleman sayd, 'Come, marry with mee,
In silks and in velvets my Bessee shall bee:
My heart lives distressed: O heare me,' quoth hee;
'And grant me thy love, my pretty Bessee.'

'Let me be thy husband,' the merchant did say,
'Thou shalt live in London both gallant and gay;
My shippes shall bring home rych jewels for thee,
And I will for ever love pretty Bessee.'

Then Bessee shee sighed, and thus shee did say,
'My father and mother I meane to obey;
First gett theyr good will, and be faithfull to mee,
And you shall enjoye your pretty Bessee.'

To every one this answer shee made;
Wherefore unto her they joyfullye sayd,
'This thing to fulfill wee all doe agree;
But where dwells thy father, my pretty Bessee?'

'My father,' quoth shee, 'is plaine to be seene:
The silly blind beggar of Bednall-greene,
That daylye sits begging for charitie,
He is the good father of pretty Bessee.



His markes and his tokens are known full well;
He alwayes is led with a dogg and a bell:
A silly olde man, God knoweth, is hee,
Yett hee is the father of pretty Bessee.'

'Nay then,' quo' the merchant, 'thou art not for mee:'
'Nor,' quo' the innholder, 'my wiffe shalt not bee:'
'I lothe,' sayd the gentle, 'a beggars degree,
And therefore, adewe, my pretty Bessee!'

'Why then,' quoth the knight, 'hap better or worse,
I waighe not true love by the waight of the pursse,
And bewtye is bewtye in every degree;
Then welcome to me, my pretty Bessee.

With thee to thy father forthwith will I goe.'
'Nay soft,' quoth his kinsmen, 'it must not be soe;
A poor beggars daughter noe ladye shall bee,
Then take thy adewe of pretty Bessee.'

But soone after this, by break of the day,
The knight had from Rumford stole Bessee away.
The younge men of Rumford, so sicke as may be,
Rode after to fetche againe pretty Bessee.

As swifte as the winde to ride they were seene,
Untill they eame neare unto Bednall-greene;
And as the knight lighted most courteouslie
They all fought against him for pretty Bessee.

But rescew came presentlye over the plaine,
Or else the knight there for his love had been slaine.
This fray being ended, then strait he did see
His kinsmen come rayling at pretty Bessee.

Then spake the blind beggar, 'Although I bee poore,
Yett rayle not against my child at my own doore:
Though shee be not decked in velvett and pearle,
Yett will I dropp angells with you for my girle.



And then, if my gold will better her birthe,
And equall the gold that you lay on the earth,
Then neyther rayle nor grudge you to see
The blind beggars daughter a lady to bee.

Butt first I will heare, and have it well knowne,
The gold that you drop shall be all your owne.'
With that they replyed, ' Contented wee bee.'
' Then here 's,' quoth the beggar, ' for pretty Bessee.'

With that an angell he cast on the ground,
And dropped in angells full three thousand pound;
And oftentimes itt was proved most plaine,
For the gentlemans one the beggar dropt twayne:

So as the place, wherein they did sitt,
With gold it was covered every whitt;
The gentleman then having dropt all his store,
Sayd, ' Now, beggar, hold, for I have noe more.

Thou hast fulfilled thy promise arright.'
' Then marry,' quoth he, ' my girle to the knight;
And heere,' quoth he,' I will now throwe you downe
A hundred pounds more to buy her a gowne.'

The gentlemen all, that this treasure had seene,
Admired the beggar of Bednall-greene:
And those that were her suitors before,
Their fleshe for very anger they tore.

Thus was their Bessee matched to a knight,
And made a ladye in others despite:
A fairer ladye there never was seene,
Than the blind beggars daughter of Bednall-greene.

But of her sumptuous marriage and feast,
What brave lords and knights thither were prest.
The second fitt shall set forth to your sight
With marveilous pleasure and wished delight.



FITT THE SECOND.

Off a blind beggars daughter most fair and bright,
That late was betrothed unto a younge knight;
All the discourse thereof you may see;
But now comes the wedding of pretty Bessee.

Within a gallant palace most brave,
Adorned with all the cost they could have,
This wedding was kept most sumptuouslie,
And all for the love of pretty Bessee.

All kind of dainties, and delicates sweete
Were brought to their banquet, as it was thought meete;
Partridge, and plover, and venison most free,
Against the brave wedding of pretty Bessee.

This wedding thro' England was spread, by report,
So that a great number did thither resort
Of nobles and gentles in every degree;
And all for the fame of pretty Bessee.

To church then went this gallant younge knight;
His bride followed after, a ladye most bright,
With troopes of ladyes, the like nere was seene
As went with sweete Bessee of Bednall-greene.

This marryage being solemnized then,
With musicke performed by the skilfullest men,
The nobles and gentles sate downe at that tyde,
Each one beholding the beautiful bryde.

But, after the sumptuous dinner was done,
To talke, and to reason a number begunn:
To talke of the blind beggars daughter most bright,
And what with his daughter he gave to the knight.



Then spake the nobles, ' Much marveil have wee,
The jolly blind beggar wee cannot here see.'
' My lords,' quoth the bride, ' my father 's so base,
Hee is loth with his presence these states to disgrace.'

' The prayse of a woman in questyon to bringe
Before her own face were a flattering thinge;
Yett wee thinke thy fathers baseness,' quoth they,
' Might by thy bewtye bee cleane put away.'

They had noe sooner these pleasant words spoke,
But in comes the beggar cladd in a silke cloke:
A faire velvet capp, and a fether had hee;
And nowe a musicyan forsooth he would bee.

Hee had a daintye lute under his arme,
Hee touched the strings, which made such a charme,
Sayd, ' Please you to heare any musicke of mee,
A song I will sing you of pretty Bessee.'

With that his lute hee twanged straitway,
And thereon begann most sweetlye to play;
And after that lessons were playd two or three,
Hee straynd out this song most delicatelìe.

' A poore beggars daughter did dwell on a greene,
Who for her bewtye might well bee a queene:
A blithe bonny lasse, and daintye was shee,
And many one called her pretty Bessee.

Her father hee had noe goods, nor noe lands,
But begged for a penny all day with his hands;
And yett for her marriage hee gave thousands three,
And still hee hath somewhat for pretty Bessee.

And if any one her birth doe disdaine,
Her father is ready, with might and with maine,
To proove shee is come of a noble degree:
Therefore let none floute att my prettye Bessee.'



With that the lords and companye round
With hearty laughter were readye to swound:
Att last said the lords, 'Full well wee may see,
The bride and the beggar's behoulden to thee.'

With that the bride all blushing did rise,
With the faire water all in her brighte eyes:
'Pardon my father, grave nobles,' quoth shee,
'That throughe blind affection thus doteth on mee.'

'If this bee thy father,' the nobles did say,
'Well may hee bee proud of this happy day;
Yett by his countenance well may wee see,
His birth with his fortune did never agree;

And therefore, blind beggar, wee pray thee bewray,
(And looke that the truth to us thou doe say)
Thy birth and thy parentage, what itt may bee,
For the love that thou bearest to pretty Bessee.'

'Then give mee leave, nobles and gentles, each one,
A song more to sing, and then I'll begone,
And if that I do not winn your good report,
Then doe not give me a groat for my sport.

Sir Simon de Montfort my subject shall bee:
Once chiefe of all the great barons was hee,
Yett fortune so cruelle this lorde did abase,
Nowe loste and forgotten are hee and his race.

When the barons in armes did King Henrye oppose,
Sir Simon de Montfort their leader they chose:
A leader of courage undaunted was hee,
And oft-times hee made their enemyes flee.

At length in the battle on Eveshame plaine
The barons were routed, and Montfort was slaine:
Most fatall that battel did prove unto thee,
Though thou wast not borne then, my pretty Bessee!



Along with the nobles, that fell at that tyde,
His eldest sonne Henrye, who fought by his side,
Was felde by a blowe, hee receivde in the fight:
A blowe that deprivde him for ever of sight.

Among the dead bodyes all lifelesse hee laye,
Till evening drewe on of the following daye,
When by a younge ladye discovered was hee;—
And this was thy mother, my pretty Bessee.

A barons faire daughter stept forth in the night,
To search for her father, who fell in the fight,
And seeing younge Montfort, where gasping hee laye,
Was moved with pitye, and brought him awaye.

In secrétte shee nurst him, and swaged his paine,
While hee through the realme was beleevd to be slaine:
At length his faire bride shee consented to bee,
And made him glad father of pretty Bessee.

And nowe lest oure foes our lives sholde betraye,
Wee clothed ourselves in beggars arraye:
Her jewelles shee solde, and hither came wee:
All our comfort and care was our pretty Bessee.

And here have wee lived in fortunes despite,
Though poore, yett contented with humble delighte:
Full forty winters thus have I beene
A silly blind beggar of Bednall-greene.

And here, noble lordes, is ended the song
Of one, that once to your own ranke did belong;
And thus have you learned a secrette from mee,
That ne'er had been knowne, but for pretty Bessee.'

Nowe when the faire companye everye one,
Had heard the strange tale in the song hee had showne,
They all were amazed, as well they might bee,
Both at the blinde beggar, and the pretty Bessee.

With that the faire bride they all did embrace,
Saying, ' Sure thou art come of an honourable race,
Thy father likewise is of noble degree,
And thou art well worthy a lady to bee.'

Thus was the feast ended with joye and delighte,
A bridegroome most happy was the younge knight,
In joy and felicitie long lived hee,
All with his faire ladye, the pretty Bessee.



Gilbert. del. Vizetelly. sc

ROBIN GOODFELLOW. This "very curious and excellent old ballad" we print from a black letter copy in the folio collection at the British Museum, where it is entitled, "The merry pranks of Robin Goodfellow, to the tune of Dulcina, &c.;" and where it is illustrated by a rude portraiture* of the merriest and most mischievous of the whole race of fairy land; who, although delighting in all manner of wild and reckless humour, was able to

> Put a girdle round about the earth
> In forty minutes.

Puck, or Robin Goodfellow, was a "shrewd and knavish sprite." His peculiar characteristics, and his especial duties, are described by many of the old poets. Ben Jonson, in his masque of "Love Restored," speaks of "Robin Goodfellow, he that sweeps the hearth and the house clean, riddles for the country maids, and does all their other drudgery, while they are at hot cockles." Drayton, in the "Polyolbion," pictures him as one who, bolting out of a bush—

> Makes us to stray
> Long winter nights out of the way,
> And when we stick in mire and clay,
> He doth with laughter leave us.

Milton alludes to him as the "delusive light" that

> Misleads the amazed night wanderer from his way,
> To bogs and mires, and oft through pond and pool.

And by Shakespeare, in the "Midsummer Night's Dream," he is characterised as chief of the sprites

> That fright the maidens of the villagery;
> Skim milk; and sometimes labour in the quern,
> And bootless make the breathless housewife churn;
> And sometime make the drink to bear ne barm;
> Mislead night-wanderers, laughing at their harm.

Indeed, he had been a favourite with the mass of the people from a very early period. He has been traced back to the 13th century, by writers of fairy mythology, and he may have existed in popular tales at an earlier period. He is repeatedly alluded to by the authors of the Elizabethan era. In "Tarleton's Newes out of Purgatorie," published immediately after his death in 1588, as the title-page asserts, "by an old Companion of his, Robin Goodfellow,"—Robin is declared to be "famozed in every old wives chronicle for his mad merrye prankes." There is a curious wood-cut representation of him on the title-page to an unique tract in the library of Lord Francis Egerton, entitled "Robin Goodfellow his mad Prankes and merry Jests;

* Ritson says that the cuts—for there are two of them—which illustrate the ballad, in the British Museum, instead of, as Dr. Percy considered, "representing the dresses in which this whimsical character was formerly exhibited upon the stage," were printed from the "identical blocks made use of by Bulwer, in his 'Artificial Changeling,' published in 1615, the first being intended for one of the black and white gallants of Seale-bay, adorned with the moon, stars, &c. and the other a hairy savage." Ritson makes this error the ground of a most fierce and bitter attack upon the prelate's character; yet it is here shewn, by an authority of which Ritson was not cognizant, that the veritable Robin Goodfellow did actually resemble a "hairy savage."

full of honest merth, and is a fit medicine for melancholy." 1628. It shews us Robin in form of a horned satyr, carrying a broom on his shoulder, and a torch in his hand. He is dancing in a ring of pigmies, one of whom is seated, and furnishing the dancers with their music from his pipe. A black cat sits opposite, and a jug occupies the foreground. The cut (which we have here copied) is curious, and will at once remind the reader of Shakespeare's "Midsummer Night's Dream," where Robin figures under the name of Puck; and is



—— Sent with broom before
To sweep the dust behind the door.

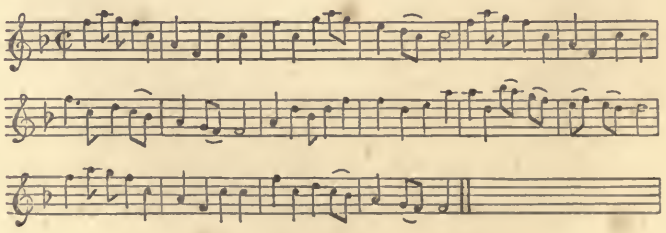
But none of the old writers represent him as a malicious spirit. His name, indeed, denotes the opposite character. He leads benighted victims into, but also through, bogs and quagmires; never leaving them to perish, although plunging them, now and then, up to the ears in mud; and that he is always generous to those who please him, we have the assurance of very old and high authorities.

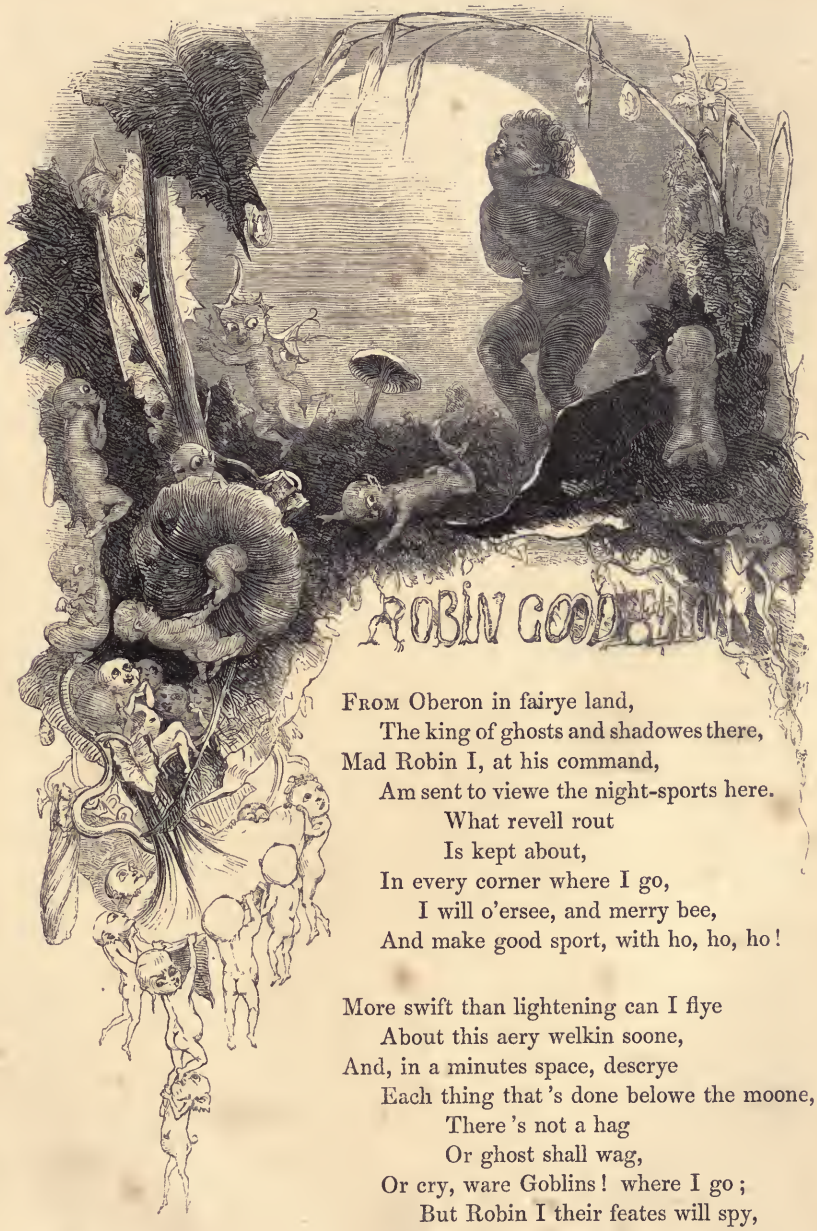
The Puck, or Phooka, of Ireland, is a far more evil-minded spirit than his English namesake. The form in which he most commonly appears is that of a horse, and his great object is to seduce some unwary wayfarer into becoming his rider. The victim once mounted, away they go. Headlong dashes the Phooka through brake and briar; through flood and fell; over mountain, valley, moor, or river; up or down precipices; between narrow gorges; in all dangerous places: utterly reckless of the agony of the unhappy wight who bestrides him. Of his merciless cruelties and malicious pranks many amusing stories are related by the peasantry; several of them are told by Mrs. S. C. Hall, in her "Sketches of Irish character."

The ballad of Robin Goodfellow is attributed by the antiquarian Peck (by whom it was originally published) to Ben Jonson, but not, it would seem, upon sufficient authority. It does not occur in his works. There is little doubt of its having been written for some Masque, in which the character of Robin Goodfellow was sustained by one of the actors, who, in addressing the audience, describes himself as being sent by Oberon

'to see the night sports here.'

The tune to which "Robin Goodfellow was sung," we copy from Ritson:—





From Oberon in fairye land,
The king of ghosts and shadowes there,
Mad Robin I, at his command,
Am sent to viewe the night-sports here.
What revell rout
Is kept about,
In every corner where I go,
I will o'ersee, and merry bee,
And make good sport, with ho, ho, ho!

More swift than lightening can I flye
About this aery welkin soone,
And, in a minutes space, descrye
Each thing that 's done belowe the moone,
There 's not a hag
Or ghost shall wag,
Or cry, ware Goblins! where I go;
But Robin I their feates will spy,
And send them home, with ho, ho, ho!

Dadd, del. Green, sc.

Robin Good-Fellow.



Whene'er such wanderers I meete,
As from their night-sports they trudge home;
With counterfeiting voice I greete,
And call them on, with me to roame
Thro' woods, thro' lakes,
Thro' bogs, thro' brakes;
Or else, unseene, with them I go,
All in the nicke to play some tricke
And frolicke it, with ho, ho, ho!

Sometimes I meete them like a man;
Sometimes, an ox, sometimes, a hound;
And to a horse I turn me can;
To trip and trot about them round.
But if, to ride,
My backe they stride,
More swift than winde away I go,
Ore hedge and lands, thro' pools and ponds
I whirry, laughing, ho, ho, ho!

When lads and lasses merry be,
With possets and with juncates fine,
Unseene of all the company,
I eat their cakes and sip their wine;
And to make sport,
I snore and snort;
And out the candles I do blow:
The maids I kiss; they shrieke—Who's this?
I answer naught, but ho, ho, ho!

Yet now and then, the maids to please,
At midnight I card up their wooll;
And while they sleepe and take their ease,
With wheel, to threads, their flax I pull.
I grind at mill
Their malt up still;
I dress their hemp, I spin their tow:
If any 'wake, and would me take,
I wend me, laughing, ho, ho, ho!

Robin Good-Fellow.



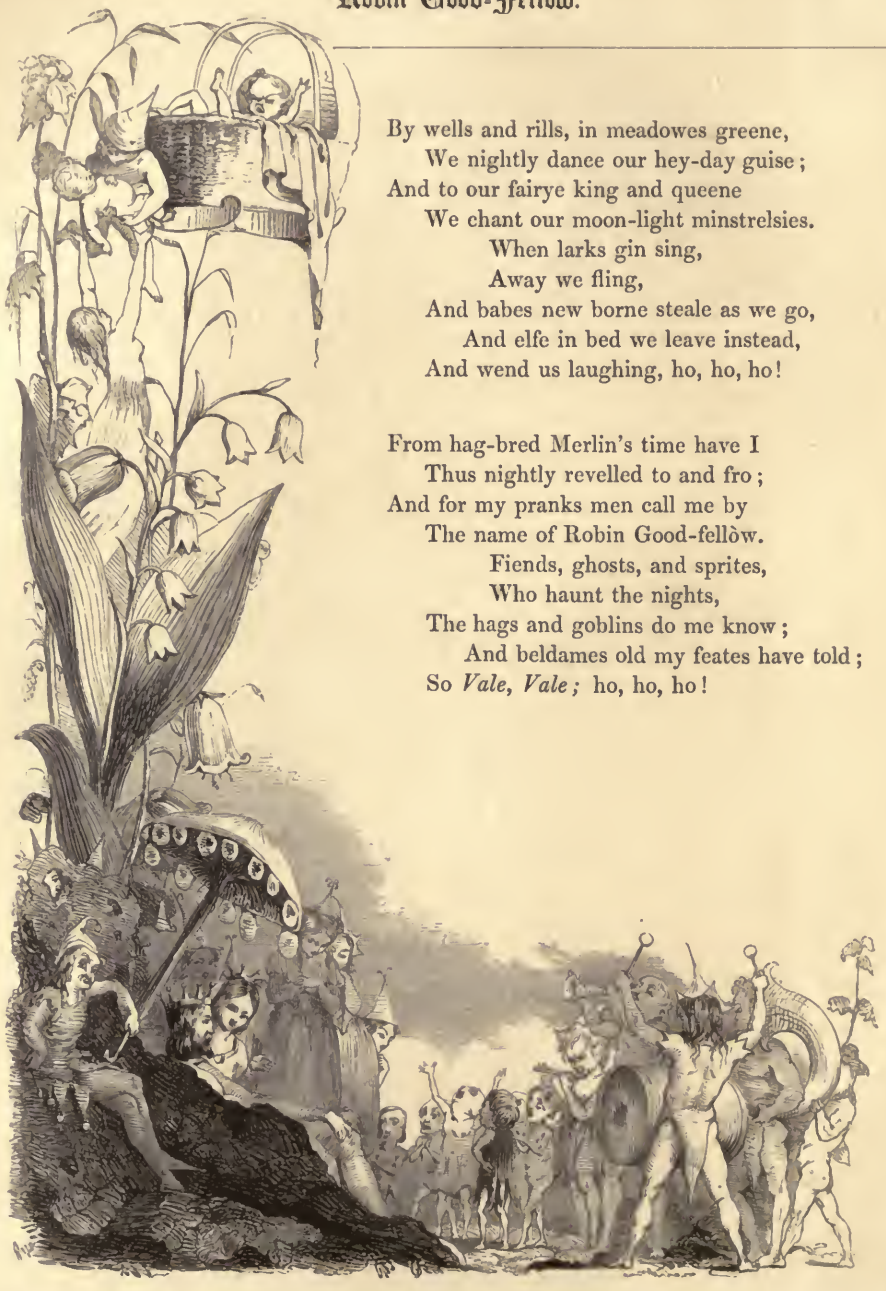
When house or harth doth sluttish lye,
I pinch the maidens black and blue;
The bed-clothes from the bedd pull I
And lay them naked all to view.
'Twixt sleepe and wake,
I do them take,
And on the key-cold floor them throw.
If out they cry, then forth I fly,
And loudly laugh out, ho, ho, ho!

When any need to borrowe aught,
We lend them what they do require;
And for the use demand we nought:
Our owne is all we do desire.
If to repay,
They do delay,
Abroad amongst them then I go,
And night by night, I them affright
With pinchings, dreames, and ho, ho, ho!

When lazie queans have nought to do,
But study how to cog and lye;
To make debate and mischief too,
'Twixt one another secretlye:
I marke their gloze,
And it disclose,
To them whom they have wronged so;
When I have done, I get me gone,
And leave them scolding, ho, ho, ho!

When men do traps and engins set
In loope holes were the vermine creepe,
Who from their foldes and houses, get
Their duckes and geese, and lambes and sheepe:
I spy the gin,
And enter in,
And seeme a vermine taken so;
But when they there approach me neare,
I leap out laughing, ho, ho, ho!

Robin Good-Fellow.



By wells and rills, in meadowes greene,
We nightly dance our hey-day guise;
And to our fairye king and queene
We chant our moon-light minstrelsies.
When larks gin sing,
Away we fling,
And babes new borne steale as we go,
And elfe in bed we leave instead,
And wend us laughing, ho, ho, ho!

From hag-bred Merlin's time have I
Thus nightly revelled to and fro;
And for my pranks men call me by
The name of Robin Good-fellòw.
Fiends, ghosts, and sprites,
Who haunt the nights,
The hags and goblins do me know;
And beldames old my feates have told;
So *Vale, Vale;* ho, ho, ho!

Dadd, del

Green, sc.

SIR PATRICK SPENS. This ballad lays claim to "a high and remote antiquity." It was originally published by Dr. Percy "from two MS. copies transmitted from Scotland;" but the copy in the "Reliques" consists of only eleven stanzas. In its enlarged and more complete form, it was printed in the "Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border," and also by Mr. Motherwell, from whose work we have extracted it; although it there differs very little from the copy given by Sir Walter Scott "from two MS. copies collated with several verses recited by his friend, Robert Hamilton, Esq.,—being the sixteenth and the four which follow." Sir Walter, however, considers it to be still a fragment. That the ballad was founded upon an actual occurrence there can be little doubt, although the earlier annotators were unable to establish the fact, and both Percy and Ritson concluded that "no memorial of the subject exists in History."

Mr. Motherwell, however, considers that it records the melancholy and disastrous fate of the gallant band which followed in the suite of Margaret, daughter of Alexander III., when she was espoused to Eric of Norway. According to Fordun—in his History of Scotland—in this expedition many distinguished nobles accompanied her to Norway to grace her nuptials, several of whom perished in a storm, while on their return to Scotland. On the other hand, Sir Walter Scott surmises that the expedition was despatched to Norway to bring home to Scotland the infant daughter of Eric and Margaret, who had become legitimate heir to the Scottish crown, in consequence of the death of Alexander III., without living issue. "The introduction of the King into the Ballad," he adds, "seems a deviation from history, unless we suppose that the aged monarch was desirous to see his grandchild before he died." The objection of the "skeely skipper" to sail at "this time of the year," is thus accounted for:—it was deemed not only imprudent, but impossible, to navigate a ship during winter. In the reign of James III., two hundred years after the date assigned to the composition, an Act of the Scottish Parliament prohibited all vessels from being navigated, "frae the feast of St. Simon's day and Jude unto the feast of the purification of Our Lady, called Candlemas."

Robert Chambers, in his edition of "Scottish Ballads" (Edinburgh, 1829),—has given a version very different, from the one we have here inserted; and Mr. Buchan, in his "Ancient Ballads and Songs," publishes another, taken down from "the recitation of a wandering minstrel, who learned it in his youth from a very old person." A verse from each of these will probably satisfy the reader:—

CHAMBERS.

Up startit the mermaid by the ship,
Wi' a glass and a kame in her hand;
Says 'Reek about, my merry men;
Ye are nae far frae land.'

BUCHAN.

The King he wrote a braid letter,
And sealed it wi' his ring;
Says, 'Ye'll gie that to Patrick Spens,
See if ye can him find.'

Mr. Buchan considers that he has obtained "the complete copy," but his version is comparatively weak; the grandeur of the composition being impaired by the occurrence of several inferior and unpoetic stanzas. In Herd's collection it is taken from Percy; in Finlay's, it is published "with many curious illustrations." Jamieson

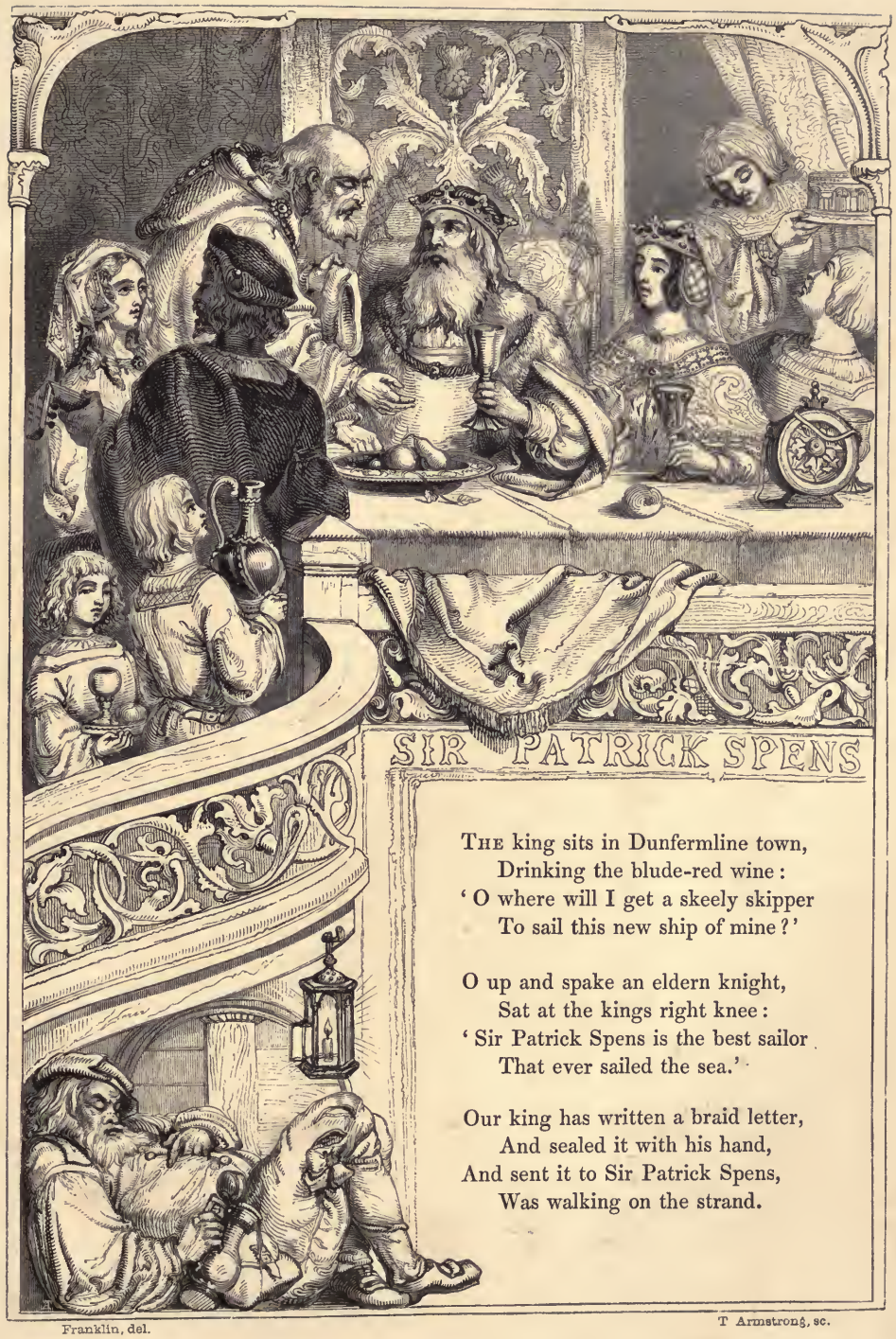
has also given several variations; and Allan Cunningham has "enriched the old and simple narrative with a number of the new verses." It may be a question, however, whether the earlier fragment, preserved by Dr. Percy, has been improved by any of the modern additions.

Some difference of opinion has existed as to whether the catastrophe occurred "forty miles off Aberdeen," or "half owre to Aberdour." On this point, Mr. Chambers "thinks it probable that Sir Patrick Spens lived near the little port of Aberdour, on the north side of the Frith of Forth; which port, though now of trifling magnitude, might then have been in use as a sort of haven to the town of Dumfermline, from which it is not far distant; and it is a likely circumstance that the ship was destined to the same port from which she had set out." He supports this reasoning by some facts. The Scottish monarchs chiefly resided in their palace of Dumfermline, from the time of Malcolm Canmore to that of Alexander the Third. Spens is, to this day, almost an exclusively Fife name. To the east of Aberdeen there is an extremely fine tract of hard, white sand—"altogether a local wonder"—upon which Mr. Chambers assumes the skipper to have been walking when he received the royal order for his embarkation. These facts are of value, as contributing to prove the actual occurrence of the event commemorated in the ballad.

The ancient ships of the English and Scottish navy were similar in their build, and singularly high, narrow, and unwieldy. The most ancient specimen we have selected for engraving, is copied from John Rouse's "History of the Life and Adventures of Richard Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick. Cotton MSS., Julius, E. 4." It gives us a correct idea of the form and appearance of a vessel in the fifteenth century, when the original drawing was executed. No improvement in build seems to have occurred during the next century; indeed the vessels were generally more elevated from the surface of the water than before. From Ortelius's map of Scotland (1595), we copy the annexed representation, which gives as fair a sample of these ships, as can be obtained. The large lower sails, the long streamers that reach nearly to the deck, and the high narrow hull, are conspicuous features. They were exceedingly liable to accidents. Sir Walter Raleigh informs us that "the 'Mary Rose,' a goodly ship of the largest size, by a little sway of the ship in casting about, her ports being within sixteen inches of the water, was overset and sunk." This happened at Spithead, and most of the officers and sailors were drowned. The expense of the clumsy structures was enormous. The "Great Harry," the famous vessel of King Henry VIII., cost £15,000. It was similar in construction and appearance, to that engraved above; indeed it was not until the reign of William III., that any considerable improvement in ship-building took place, and then it proceeded very slowly.







SIR PATRICK SPENS

The king sits in Dunfermline town,
Drinking the blude-red wine:
'O where will I get a skeely skipper
To sail this new ship of mine?'

O up and spake an eldern knight,
Sat at the kings right knee:
'Sir Patrick Spens is the best sailor
That ever sailed the sea.'

Our king has written a braid letter,
And sealed it with his hand,
And sent it to Sir Patrick Spens,
Was walking on the strand.

Franklin, del.

T Armstrong, sc.

Sir Patrick Spens.



'To Noroway, to Noroway,
To Noroway o'er the faem;
The kings daughter of Noroway,
'T is thou maun bring her hame!'

The first word that Sir Patrick read,
Sae loud loud laughed he;
The neist word that Sir Patrick read,
The tear blindit his e'e.

'O wha is this has done this deed,
And tauld the king o' me,
To send us out at this time o' the year,
To sail upon the sea?

Be it wind, be it weet, be it hail, be it sleet,
Our ship must sail the faem;
The kings daughter of Noroway
'T is we must fetch her hame.'

They hoysed their sails on Monenday morn
Wi' a' the speed they may;
They hae landed in Noroway
Upon a Wodensday.

They hadna been a week, a week
In Noroway, but twae,
When that the lords o' Noroway
Began aloud to say:

'Ye Scottishmen spend a' our kings gowd
And a' our queenis fee.'—
'Ye lie, ye lie ye liars loud!
Fu' loud I hear ye lie!

For I hae brought as much white monie
As gane my men and me,
And I hae brought a half-fou o' gude red gowd
Out owre the sea wi' me.

Make ready, make ready my merrymen a'!
Our gude ship sails the morn.'—

Sir Patrick Spens.



'Now, ever alake! my master dear,
I fear a deadly storm.

I saw the new moon, late yestreen,
Wi' the auld moon in her arm;
And if we gang to sea, master,
I fear we 'll come to harm.'

They hadna sailed a league, a league,
A league but barely three,
When the lift grew dark, and the wind blew loud,
And gurly grew the sea.

The ankers brak, and the topmasts lap,
It was sic a deadly storm;
And the waves came o'er the broken ship
Till a' her sides were torn.

'O where will I get a gude sailor
To take my helm in hand,
Till I get up to the tall topmast
To see if I can spy land?'

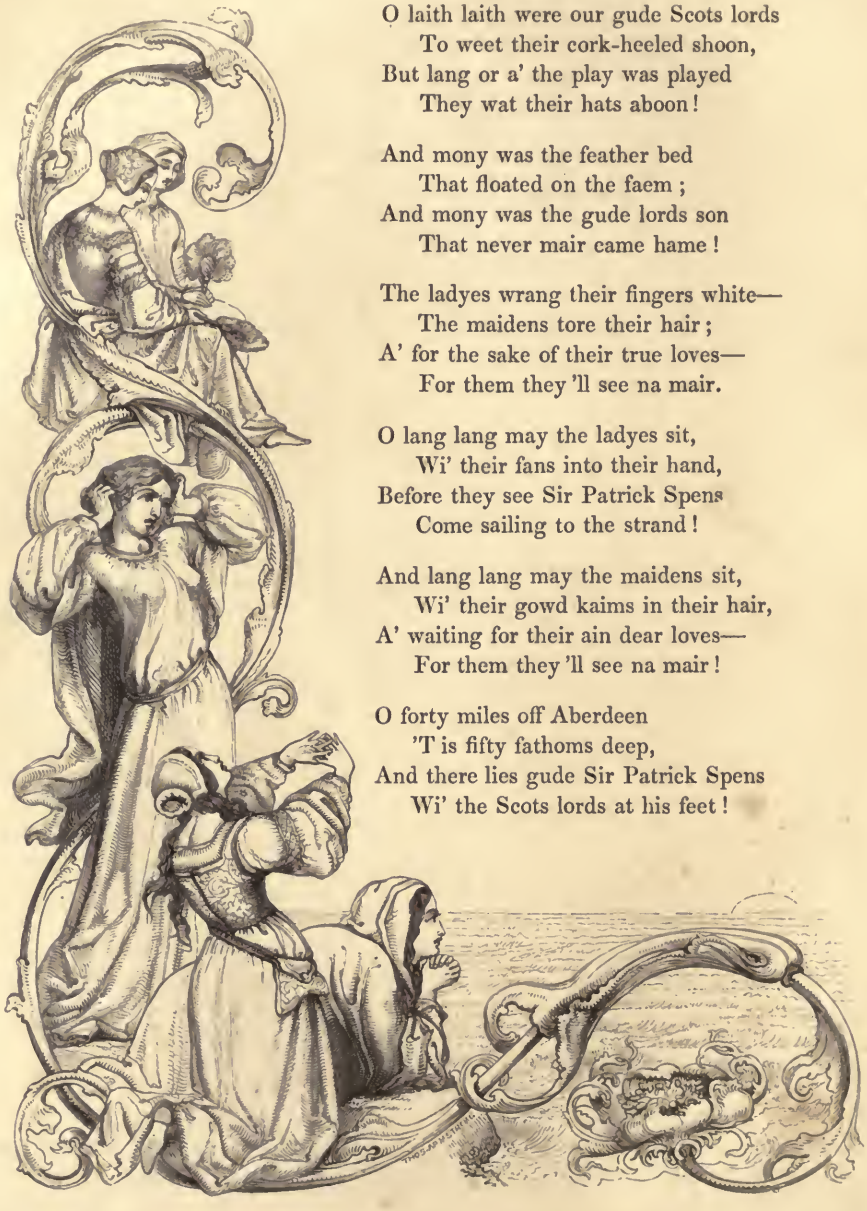
O here am I, a sailor gude,
To take the helm in hand,
Till you go up to the tall topmast—
But I fear you 'll ne'er spy land.'

He hadna gane a step, a step,
A step, but barely ane,
When a boult flew out of our goodly ship,
And the salt sea it came in.

'Gae fetch a web o' the silken claith,
Another o' the twine,
And wap them into our ships side,
And letna the sea come in.'

They fetched a web o' the silken claith,
Another o' the twine,
And they wapped them roun' that gude ships side;
But still the sea came in.

Sir Patrick Spens.



O laith laith were our gude Scots lords
To weet their cork-heeled shoon,
But lang or a' the play was played
They wat their hats aboon!

And mony was the feather bed
That floated on the faem;
And mony was the gude lords son
That never mair came hame!

The ladyes wrang their fingers white—
The maidens tore their hair;
A' for the sake of their true loves—
For them they 'll see na mair.

O lang lang may the ladyes sit,
Wi' their fans into their hand,
Before they see Sir Patrick Spens
Come sailing to the strand!

And lang lang may the maidens sit,
Wi' their gowd kaims in their hair,
A' waiting for their ain dear loves—
For them they 'll see na mair!

O forty miles off Aberdeen
'T is fifty fathoms deep,
And there lies gude Sir Patrick Spens
Wi' the Scots lords at his feet!

Franklin, del. T. Armstrong, sc.



IL MORRICE. We retain the old title ot this ballad, although modern annotators consider it to be that which Percy surmised it to have been,—a corruption of "Child Maurice:"—a name restored to it in the Collections of Pinkerton and Jamieson, but given as "Child Noryce" by Motherwell, who assumes it to be, in each instance, only an alteration of the word "Norice, a nurseling or foster." Before Dr. Percy introduced it into the Reliques, it had "run through two editions in Scotland, the second having been printed at Glasgow in 1755:"—to both of them an advertisement was prefixed, setting forth that it had been communicated to the printers by a lady, by whom it had been collected from "the mouths of old women and nurses," and suggesting, that if any reader "could render it more correct or complete" he might "oblige the public" by so doing. The consequence of so seductive an invitation was the prompt supply of sixteen additional lines: they were first handed about in manuscript; subsequently printed by Mr. Herd in his "Ancient and Modern Scottish Songs," (Edinburgh, 1777); and afterwards by Dr. Percy, who, however, warns the reader against considering them in any other light than that of an "ingenious interpolation." An interpolation they are, undoubtedly; yet scarcely an ingenious one; for occurring as they do, after the simple and affecting verse which prepares the reader for the coming tragedy, they are rightly characterised by Sir Walter Scott as the "quintessence of affectation." We shall omit them from our copy of the ballad, but insert them in a note.

Although there can be no doubt that the poem is of high antiquity, Dr. Percy considers it to have undergone many "modern improvements;" and he grounds his opinion chiefly on the fact, that his own "folio M.S." contains a very imperfect copy of the same ballad; "wherein, though the leading features of the story are the same, yet the colouring is so much improved and heightened, and so many additional strokes are thrown in, that it is evident the whole has undergone a revisal." The "imperfect copy" to which Dr. Percy refers, has been printed by Jamieson in his "Popular Ballads and Songs," as he states "with most minute and scrupulous exactness." An example may satisfy the curiosity of the reader; it describes the catastrophe:—

and sayes 'dost thou know Child Maurice head
iff that thou dost itt see
and clap itt soft and kisse itt offt
ffor thou lovedst him better than mee'

but when shee looked on Child Maurice head
shee never spake words but three
'I never beare noe child but one
and you have slaine him trulye'

sayes 'wicked be my merry men all
I gave meate drinke and clothe
but cold they not have holden mee
when I was in all that wrath

ffor I have slaine the courteousest knighte
that ever bestrode a steed
soe have I done one of the fairest ladyes
that ever ware womans weede'

The tragedy of "Douglas," originally acted at Edinburgh, in 1756, and at Covent Garden, in 1757, gave extensive popularity to the ballad, upon which it was founded, and about that period it "underwent a total revisal." "But," writes Mr. Motherwell, "though it has been grievously corrupted by ingenious interpolations as well as

paraphrastic additions, the most scrupulous inquirer into the authenticity of ancient song, can have no hesitation in admitting, that many of its verses, even as they now stand, are purely traditionary, and fair and genuine parcels of antiquity, unalloyed with any base admixture of modern invention, and in no wise altered, save in those changes of language to which all oral poetry is unavoidably subjected in its progress from one age to another." Mr. Motherwell proceeds to support his opinion by printing, "for the first time," a ballad entitled "Childe Noryce," which he gives "verbatim as it was taken down from the singing of the Widow M'Cormick, who was at that date, January, 1825, residing in Westbrae Street, Paisley." This ballad he considers the "prime root from which all the variations heretofore known have originated;" contending that "its clear, straight-forward, rapid, and succinct narrative—its extreme simplicity of style and utter destitution of all ornament, argue powerfully in behalf of the primitiveness and authenticity of its text." It consists of no more than eighteen verses. Some of them we here copy:—

Child Noryce is a clever young man,
He wavers wi' the wind:
His horse was silver shod before,
With the beaten gold behind.

He called to his little man John,
Saying, 'You do n't see what I see;
For, Oh! yonder I see the very first woman
That ever loved me.'

* * * *

O when he came to Lord Barnard's castel,
He tingled at the ring:
Who was as ready as Lord Barnard himself
To let this little boy in?

* * * *

Lord Barnard he had a little small sword,
That hung low down on his knee:
He cut the head off Child Noryce,
And put the body on a tree.

And when he came to his castel,
And to his lady's hall,
He threw the head into her lap,
Saying, 'Lady, there is a ball!'

She turned up the bloody head;
She kissed it frae cheek to chin:
'Far better do I love this bloody head
Than all my royal kin.'

* * * *

'Oh, wae be to thee, Lady Margaret!' he said,
'And an ill death may you die;
For, if you had told me he was your son,
He had ne'er been slain by me.'

Mr. Motherwell asserts that the ballad is founded on facts which occurred at some remote period of Scottish history; and points out the several localities to which reference is made.



The "siller cup and mazer dish," of this ballad, have not been well explained by Percy. In a note, he describes the mazer dish to be a drinking cup of maple; it is far more likely to have been the dish upon which the cup stood. A beautiful cup, with its dish-shaped stand, still exists in Oriel College, Oxford, presented by Bishop Stapleton in 1470. The stand, or dish, is of the cocoa-tree. We have selected, as an illustration of the passage, a beautiful specimen of a richly ornamented cup and dish, from an engraving by the celebrated Hans Burgmair, dated 1517.



Ill Morrice was an erles son,
His name it waxed wide;
It was nae for his parentage,
Nor yet his meikle pride,
Bot for his dame, a lady gay,
Wha livd on Carrons side.

Meadows, del

Linton, sc.



'Whar sall I get a bonny boy,
That will win hose and shoen,
That will gae to Lord Barnards ha',
And bid his lady come?

And ye maun rin my errand, Willie,
And ye maun rin wi' speid;
When ither boys gang on their feet,
Ye sall ha' prancing steid.'

'O, no! O, no! my master deir,
I dar na for my life;
I 'll no gae to the bauld barons,
For to triest furth his wife.'

'My bird Willie, my boy Willie,
My deir Willie!' he said,
'How can ye strive against the streim?
For I sall be obeyd.'

'Bot O my master deir,' he cryd,
'In grene wode ye 're your lane;
Gi' owr sic thochts I wold ye red,
For feir ye sold be tane.'

'Haste! haste! I say, gae to the ha',
Bid her come here wi' speid:
If ye refuse my hie command,
I 'll gar your body bleid.

Gae bid her tak this gay mantel,
'T is a' gowd but the hem;
Bid her come to the gude grene wode,
Ein by hersel alane;

And there it is, a silken sarke,
Her ain hand sewd the sleeve;
And bid her come to Gil Morrice,
Speir nae bauld barons leive.'



'Yes! I will gae your black errand,
Thoch it be to your cost:
Sen ye by me will nae be warnd,
In it ye sall find frost.

The baron he is a man o' micht,
He neir cold bide to taunt;
And ye will see, before its nicht,
Sma' cause ye ha' to vaunt.

And sen I maun your errand rin,
Sae sair against my will,
I 'se mak a vow, and keep it trow,
It sall be done for ill!'

When he cam to the broken brig,
He bent his bow and swam;
And when he cam to grass growing,
Set down his feet and ran.

And when he cam to Barnards yeat,
Wold neither chap nor ca',
Bot set his bent bow to his breist,
And lichtly lap the wa'.

He wold na tell the man his errand,
Thoch he stude at the yeat;
Bot streight into the ha' he cam,
Whar they were set at meat.

'Hail! hail! my gentle sire and dame!
My message winna wait,—
Dame, ye maun to the grene wode gae,
Afore that it be late.

'Ye 're bidden tak this gay mantel,
'T is a' gowd bot the hem;
Ye maun haste to the gude grene wode
Ein by yoursell alane.



And there it is, a silken sark,
Your ain hand sewd the sleive:
Ye maun gae speik to Gil Morrice,
Speir nae bauld barons leive.'

The lady stamped wi' her foot,
And winked wi' her eie;
Bot a' that shee cold say or do,
Forbidden he wold nae be.

'It 's surely to my bower-woman,
It neir cold be to me.'—
I brocht it to Lord Barnards lady,
I trow that ye be shee.'

Then up and spak the wylie nurse
(The bairn upon her knee),
'If it be come from Gil Morrice,
It 's deir welcum to me.'

'Ye lie, ye lie, ye filthy nurse,
Sae loud I heir ye lie;
I brocht it to Lord Barnards lady,
I trow ye be nae shee.'

Then up and spake the bauld baron,
An angry man was he:
He has tane the table wi' his foot,
Sae has he wi' his knee,
Till siller cup and mazer dish
In flinders he gard flie.

'Gae bring a robe of your cleiding,
Wi a' the haste ye can;
And I 'll gae to the gude green wode,
And speik wi your lemman.'

'O bide at hame now, Lord Barnard!
I warde ye bide at hame;
Neir wyte a man for violence,
Wha neir wyte ye wi' nane!'

Gil Morrice.



Gil Morrice sat in the grene wode,
He whistled and he sang:
'O, what meins a' the folk coming?
My mother tarries long.'*

The baron to the grene wode cam,
Wi' meikle dule and care;
And there he first spyed Gil Morrice
Kaming his yellow hair.

'Nae wonder, nae wonder, Gil Morrice,
My lady loes thee weil;
The fairest part of my body
Is blacker than thy heil.

Yet neir the less now, Gil Morrice,
For a' thy great bewtie,
Ye 'll rew the day ye eir was born;
That heid shall gae wi' me!'

* The following are the stanzas alluded to in the Introductory Remarks. They are, obviously, emendations by "a modern hand:"—

His hair was like the threeds of gold,
Drawn frae Minervas loome:
His lippes like roses drapping dew;
His breath was a' perfume.

His brow was like the mountain snae
Gilt by the morning beam:
His cheeks like living roses glow:
His een like azure stream.

The boy was clad in robes of grene,
Sweete as the infant spring:
And like the mavis on the bush,
He gart the vallies eing.

The following verse occurs after the line "Kaming his yellow hair:"—

That sweetly wavd around his face,
That face beyond compare:
He sang sae sweet it might dispel
A' rage but fell despair.



Now he has drawn his trusty brand,
And slaided owr the strae;
And throuch Gil Morrice fair body
He gard the cauld iron gae.

And he has tane Gil Morrice heid,
And set it on a speir;
The meinest man in a' his train,
Has gotten that heid to beir.

And he has tane Gil Morrice up,
Laid him across his steid;
The meinest man in a' his train,
Has gotten that steid to lede.

The lady on the castle wa'
Beheld baith dale and down;
And there she saw Gil Morrice heid
Cum trailing to the toun.

'Better I loe that bluidy heid,
Bot and that yellow hair,
Than Lord Barnard and a' his lands,
As they lie here and there.'

And she has tane her Gil Morrice,
And kissed baith cheik and chin;
'I was ance as fou o' Gil Morrice,
As the hip is o' the stane.

I bore ye in my fathers house,
Wi' meikle sin and shame;
I brocht ye up in the grene wode,
Under the heavy rain.

Oft have I by thy craddle sitten,
And fondly seen thee sleip;
But now I maun gae 'bout thy grave
A mothers teirs to weep!'



Again she kissd his bluidy cheik,
Again his bluidy chin;
'O better I loed my son Morrice,
Than a' my kyth and kin!'

'Awa, awa, ye ill woman,
An ill dethe may ye die!
Gin I had kend he was your son,
He had neir been slayne by me!'

'Obraid me not, my Lord Barnard,
Obraid me not for shame!
Wi' that same speir, O perce my heart,
And save me frae my pain!

'Since naething but Gil Morrice head
Thy jealous rage cold quell,
Let that same hand now tak her lyfe,
That neir to thee did ill.

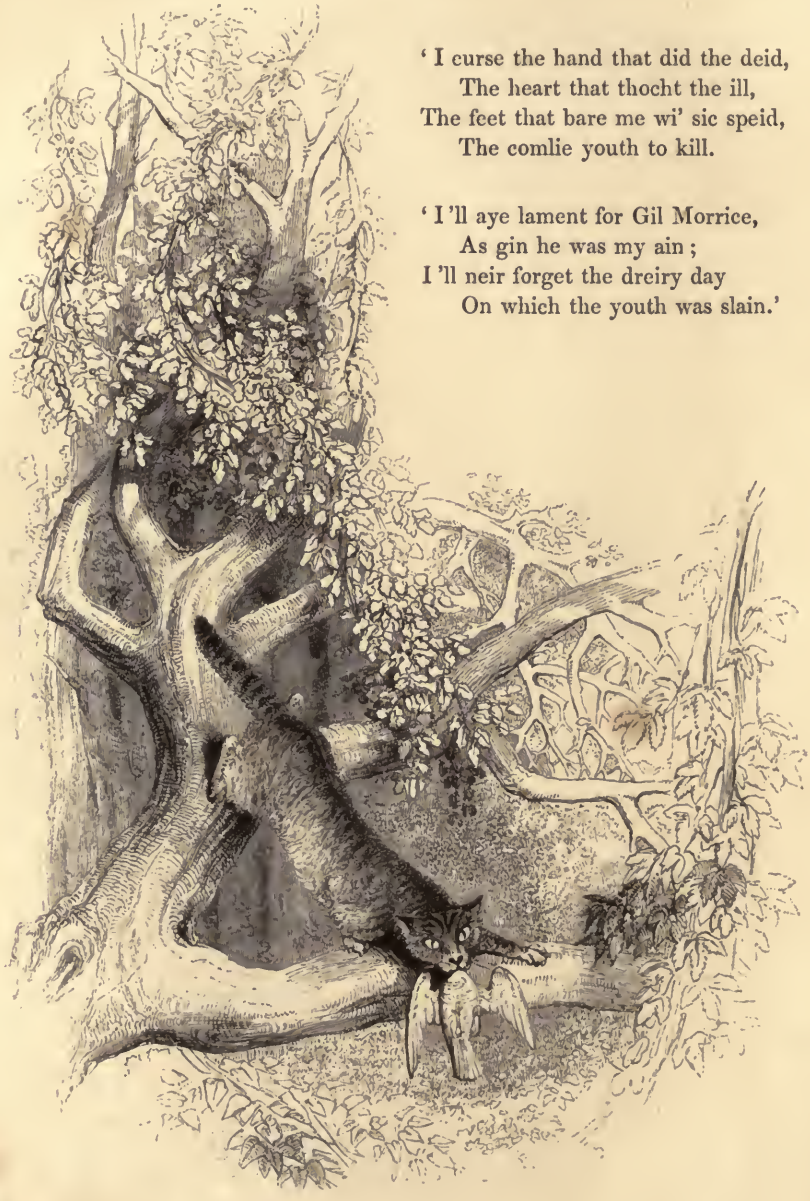
To me nae after days nor nichts
Will eir be saft or kind;
I 'll fill the air wi' heavy sichs,
And greit till I be blind.'

'Eneuch of bluid by me 's been spilt,
Seek not your dethe frae me;
I 'd rather far it had been mysel,
Than either him or thee.

'Wi' hopeless wae I hear your plaint,
Sair, sair, I rue the deed—
That eir this cursed hand of mine
Sold gar his body bleid!

Dry up your teirs, my winsome dame,
They neir can heal the wound;
Ye see his heid upon the spier,
His hearts bluid on the ground.

Gil Morrice.



'I curse the hand that did the deid,
The heart that thocht the ill,
The feet that bare me wi' sic speid,
The comlie youth to kill.

'I 'll aye lament for Gil Morrice,
As gin he was my ain;
I 'll neir forget the dreiry day
On which the youth was slain.'

Meadows del. Linton sc.



IR ALDINGAR. This ballad we copy from the "Reliques" of Dr. Percy: the only information he affords in reference to it, is, that "the old fabulous legend is given from his folio MS.; with conjectural emendations, and the insertion of some additional stanzas to supply and complete the story." He adds, indeed, "it has been suggested, that the author of the poem seems to have had in his eye the story of Gunhilda, who is sometimes called Eleanor, and was married to the Emperor (here called King) Henry;"—but he leaves us in utter ignorance as to the extent of his additions, and the nature of his improvements. The only light that has been thrown upon the subject was by Sir Walter Scott, who has published a ballad, entitled "Sir Hugh le Blond," in which the incidents are nearly similar to those contained in Sir Aldingar; except that in the former, the calumniated Queen is rescued from the fire by a mortal champion instead of a "tinye boy." The composition, as printed in the "Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border," was given to the accomplished editor by K. Williamson Burnet, of Monboddo, Esq., "who wrote it down from the recitation of an old woman, long in the service of the Arbuthnot family,"—a founder of that family having been the hero of the story. The diction is "very much humbled," and it has, in all probability, undergone many corruptions; but "its antiquity is indubitable."

"The tradition upon which it is founded is," adds Sir Walter Scott, "universally current among the Mearns;" and he was informed, that "until very lately, the sword with which Sir Hugh le Blond was believed to have defended the honour of the Queen, was carefully preserved by his descendants, the Viscounts of Arbuthnot." This Sir Hugh lived in the thirteenth century; but there is no instance in history, in which the good name of a Queen of Scotland was committed to the chance of a duel.

Such occurrences are, however, common in old romance; and are often noted in genuine history. "The most solemn part of a knight's oath was, to defend all widows, orphelines, and maidens of good fame;" and such an oath is still taken by the knights of the Bath. In the days of chivalry, when trial by battle was generally preferred to trial by law, it was customary for ladies to seek their defence in the strong arm of one of those heroes whose motto was, usually, "Loyaulté aux Dames." No true knight could resist the appeal. By the rules of the order of "The Band," a society of knights, founded by Alphonsus XI., King of Spain in 1330, and so called from the red band, or scarf, they wore across their breasts to distinguish them from others; it was ordained, that if any knight happened to meet a lady, it was his duty to alight, and tender his services, upon pain of losing a month's wages, and the favour of all dames and damsels; and that if he refused to perform any service a fair lady commanded, he should be branded with the title of "the discourteous knight." While refusals are unrecorded, we have many instances of the most ardent devotion to the cause of the ladies: a chevalier, called the "Knight of the Swan," re-instated a lady, in the possessions of which the Duke of Saxony had deprived her, because he felt indignant that the throne, and not chivalry, should be regarded as the fountain of justice. Knights frequently formed themselves into associations for the express purpose of defending the rights of all ladies who required their aid.

So late as 1425, when the title to certain counties in Hainault were contested between the English Duke of Gloucester and John of Brabant, on behalf of the lady Jacqueline, Monstrelet tells us, that these gallant cavaliers, St. Pol and André de Humiéres, arranged themselves for the journey, and appeared together at Hesden, with silver rings upon their right arms, as badges by which themselves and their cause might be distinguished, and openly proclaimed themselves the champions of Jacqueline, boldly asserting her superior title to the lands in debate. It was an argument seriously urged by Sir John of Heinault, for making war upon Edward II., in behalf of his banished wife, Isabella, that "knights were bound to aid, to their utmost power, all distressed damsels living without counsel or comfort."

To fight for a lady! a benedicite!
It were a lusty sight for to see.

The very old, but now happily exploded, custom of burning at the stake, is too well known to require any comment here. Treason was thus punished; and the unfaithfulness of a queen consort would have been thus visited. The murder of a husband, considered by the law as petty treason, always was so. We engrave an ancient and curious representation of a lady, bound and brought to the stake by two executioners; it occurs in the Harleian collection of manuscripts, in the British Museum, No. 4411, and from the costume of the figures, and general appearance of the book, it was probably written, and the drawings were made, in the reign of King Richard II. Representations of this punishment, of so ancient a date, are very rarely to be met with.



The queen's dream of the "grype," or griffin, who, after depriving her of her crown, and all her "faire head geare," was about to carry her as a prey to his nest, was only an imaginary realization of a popular belief concerning this fabulous creature. An old traveller to the East, Sir John Mandeville, who returned from thence about A.D. 1356, particularly describes these creatures as inhabiting that quarter of the globe. He says, that the upper parts of their bodies were like eagles, and the lower part like lions, but that one griffin is greater and stronger than eight lions, or one hundred eagles; "for one griffoun there wil bere, fleynge to his nest, a great horse, or two oxen yoked togidere, as thei gon to the plowghe." In an illuminated copy of these travels—in the British Museum, Harleian MSS. No. 3954—is a very curious drawing, representing a knight and his horse carried by a griffin to his nest as food for its young, much in the same way that the queen, in the ballad, imagined herself to be carried. We copy the singular subject, which would appear to be a favourite way of shewing the power of the creature; for a bas-relief upon the front of the Hotel de Bourgtherolde, at Rouen, erected in the time of Francis I., exhibits a similar scene, with this difference only, that the knight, in full armour, is carried away by a griffin, while his horse and attendant squire are allowed to remain in amazement below.







SIR ALDINGAR.

Our king hee kept a false stewàrde,
Sir Aldingar they him call:
A falser stewarde then hee was one,
Servde not in bower nor hall.

Hee wolde have layne by our comelye queene,
Her deere worshippe to betraye:
Our queene shee was a good womàn,
And evermore said him naye.

Sir Aldingar was wrothe in his mind,
With her hee was never content,
Till traiterous meanes hee colde devyse,
In a fyer to have her brent.

Gilbert, del. Gilks, sc.

Sir Aldingar.



There came a lazar to the Kings gate,
A lazar both blinde and lame:
Hee tooke the lazar upon his backe,
Him on the Queenes bedd has layne.

'Lye still, lazar, wheras thou lyest,
Looke thou goe not hence away;
Ile make thee a whole man and a sound
In two howers of the day.'

Then went him forthe Sir Aldingar,
And hyed him to our king:—
'If I might have grace, as I have space,
Sad tydings I could bring.'

'Say on, say on, Sir Aldingar,
Say on the soothe to mee.'
'Our queene hath chosen a newe, newe love,
And shee will have none of thee!

If shee had chosen a right good knight,
The lesse had beene her shame;
But shee hath chose her a lazar man,
A lazar both blinde and lame.'

'If this bee true, thou Aldingar,
The tyding thou tellest to mee,
Then will I make thee a rich rich knight,
Rich both of golde and fee.

But if it be false, Sir Aldingar,
As God nowe grant it bee!
Thy body, I sweare by the holye rood,
Shall hang on the gallowes tree.'

Hee brought our king to the Queenes chambèr,
And opend to him the dore.
'A lordlye love,' King Harry says,
'For our queene dame Elinore!



If thou were a man, as thou art none,
Heere on my sword thou 'st dye;
But a payre of new gallowes shall bee built,
And there shalt thou hang on hye.'

Forthe then hyed our king, I wysse,
And an angry man was hee;
And soon hee found Queene Elinore,
That bride so bright of blee.

'Nowe God you save, our queene, madame,
And Christ you save and see!
Heere you have chosen a newe newe love,
And you will have none of mee!

If you had chosen a right good knight,
The lesse had been your shame;
But you have chose you a lazar man,
A lazar both blinde and lame;

Therfore a fyer there shall bee built,
And brent all shalt thou bee!'
'Nowe out alacke! sayd our comelye queene,
Sir Aldingar 's false to mee.

Now out alacke!' sayd our comelye queene,
'My hart with griefe will brast:
I had thought swevens had never been true;
I have proved them true at last.

I dreamt in my sweven on Thursday eve,
In my bed wheras I laye.
I dreamt a grype and a grimlie beast
Had carryed my crowne awaye:

My gorgett and my kirtle of golde,
And all my faire head geere;
And hee wolde worrye me with his tush
And to his nest y-beare.



Saving there came a little gray hawke,
A merlin him they call
Which untill the grounde did strike the grype,
That dead hee downe did fall.

Giffe I were a man, as nowe I am none,
A battell wolde I prove,
To fight with that traitor Aldingar;
Att him I cast my glove.

Bot seeing Ime able noe battell to make,
My liege, grant mee a knight
To fighte with that traitor Sir Aldingar,
To maintaine mee in my righte.'

'Nowe forty dayes I will give thee,
To seeke thee a knight therin:
If thou finde not a knight in forty dayes
Thy bodye it must brenn.'

Then shee sent east, and shee sent west,
By north and south bedeene;
Bot never a champion colde shee finde,
Wolde fighte with that knight soe keene.

Nowe twenty dayes were spent and gone,
Noe helpe there might bee had:
Many a teare shed our comelye queene
And aye her hart was sad.

Then came one of the Queenes damsèlles,
And knelt upon her knee;—
'Cheare up, cheare up, my gracious dame,
I trust yet helpe may bee:

And heere I will make mine avowe,
And with the same mee binde;
That never will I return to thee,
Till I some helpe may finde!'



Then forthe she rode on a faire palfràye
O'er hill and dale about;
Bot never a champion colde shee finde,
Wolde fighte with that knight so stout.

And nowe the daye drewe on apace,
When our good queene must dye:
All woe-begone was that faire damsèlle,
When shee found no helpe was nye.

All woe-begone was that faire damsèlle,
And the salt teares fell from her eye;
When lo! as shee rode by a rivers side,
Shee mette with a tinye boye.

A tinye boye shee mette, God wot,
All clad in mantle of golde:
Hee seemed noe more in mans likenèsse,
Then a childe of four yeere old.

'Why grieve you, damselle faire,' hee sayd,
'And what doth cause you moane?'
The damselle scant wolde deigne a looke,
Bot fast shee pricked on.

'Yet turn againe, thou faire damsèlle,
And greete thy queene from mee:
When bale is att hyest, boote is nyest,
Nowe helpe enoughe may bee.

Bid her remember what shee dreamt
In her bedd, wheras shee lay;
How when the grype and the grimlie beast
Wolde have carryed her crowne awaye,

Even then there came a little gray hawke,
And saved her from his clawes;
Then bidd the Queene be merry at hart,
For heaven will fende her cause.'



Back then rode that faire damsèlle,
And her hart it lept for glee;
And when shee told her gracious dame
A gladd woman then was shee.

Bot when the appointed daye was come,
No helpe appeared nye;
Then woeful, woeful was her hart,
And the teares stood in her eye.

And nowe a fyer was built of wood;
And a stake was made of tree;
And nowe Queene Elinore forthe was led,
A sorrowful sight to see.

Three times the herault he waved his hand,
And three times spake on hye:
'Giffe any good knight will fende this dame,
Come forthe, or shee must dye.'

No knight stood forthe, no knight there came,
No helpe appeared nye;
And nowe the fyer was lighted up,
Queene Elinore shee must dye.

And nowe the fyer was lighted up,
As hot as hot might be;
When riding upon a little white steed,
The tinye boy they see.

'Away with that stake! away with those brands!
And loose our comelye queene:
I am come to fighte with Sir Aldingar,
And prove him a traitor keene!'

Forthe then stoode Sir Aldingar,
Bot when hee saw the chylde,
Hee laughed, and scoffed, and turned his backe,
And weened hee had been beguylde.



'Nowe turne, nowe turne thee, Aldingar,
And eyther fighte or flee:
I trust that I shall avenge the wronge,
Though I am so small to see.'

The boye pulld forthe a well good sworde
So gilt it dazzled the ee:—
The first stroke stricken at Aldingar
Smote off his leggs by the knee.

'Stand up! stand up! thou false traitòr,
And fighte upon thy feete,
For and thou thrive, as thou beginst,
Of height wee shall be meete!'

'A priest! a priest!' sayes Aldingar,
'While I am a man alive,—
A priest, a priest,' sayes Aldingar,
'Me for to houzle and shrive!

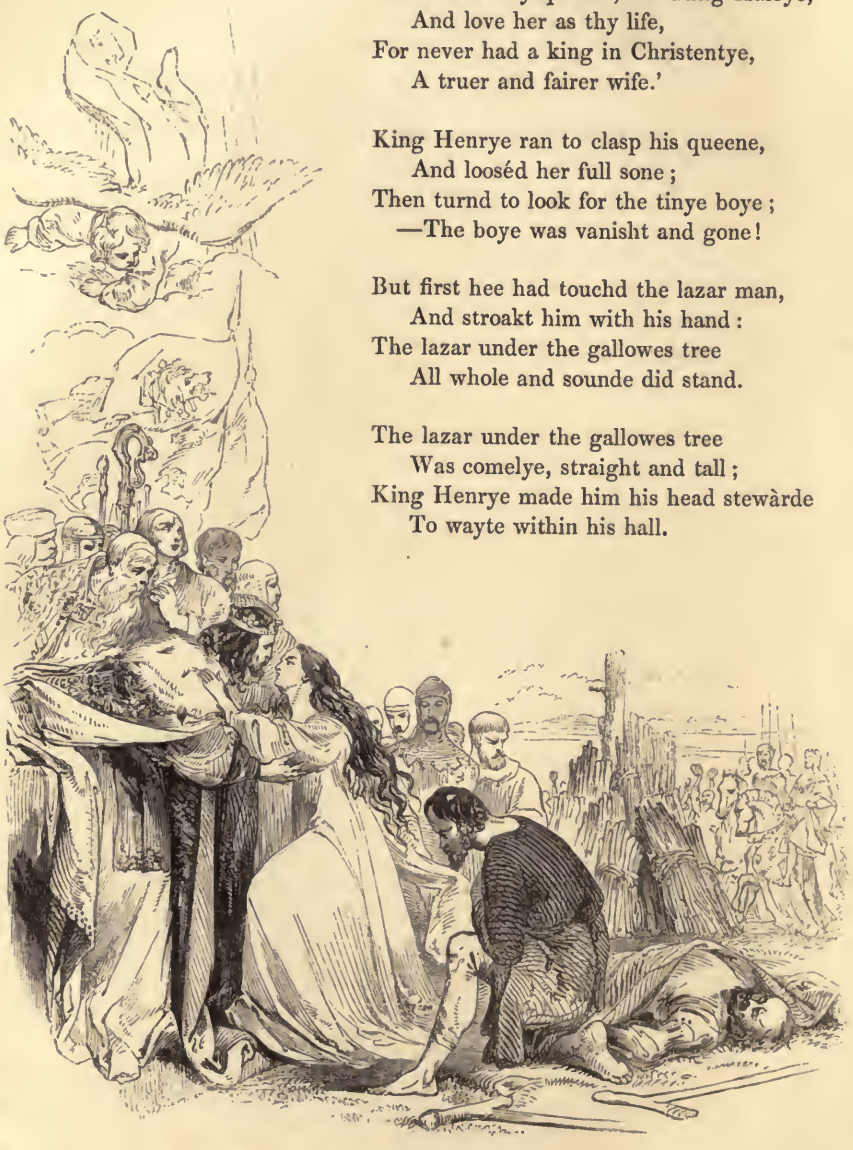
I wolde have layne by our comelye queene,
Bot shee wolde never consent;
Then I thought to betraye her unto our king,
In a fyer to have her brent.

There came a lazar to the Kings gates,
A lazar both blinde and lame;
I tooke the lazar upon my backe,
And on her bedd had him layne.

Then ranne I to our comelye king,
These tidings sore to tell.
Bot ever alacke!' sayes Aldingar,
'Falsing never doth well:—

Forgive! forgive mee, Queene, madame,
The short time I must live!'
'Nowe Christ forgive thee, Aldingar,
As freely I forgive!'

Sir Aldingar.



'Here take thy queene, our King Harrye,
And love her as thy life,
For never had a king in Christentye,
A truer and fairer wife.'

King Henrye ran to clasp his queene,
And looséd her full sone;
Then turnd to look for the tinye boye;
—The boye was vanisht and gone!

But first hee had touchd the lazar man,
And stroakt him with his hand:
The lazar under the gallowes tree
All whole and sounde did stand.

The lazar under the gallowes tree
Was comelye, straight and tall;
King Henrye made him his head stewàrde
To wayte within his hall.

Gilbert, del. Folkard, sc.

SIR LANCELOT DU LAKE. We print this ballad from a black letter copy in the folio collection at the British Museum, where it is entitled, "The Noble Acts Newly Found Of Arthur of the Table Round. To the tune of Flying Fame. Printed by and for Alex. Melbourn, in Green Arches Court, in the Little Old Bailey." Dr. Percy published it "from a printed copy, corrected in part by a fragment in his folio MS." The copy in the British Museum, the learned editor could not have seen; for it is much purer than the one that occurs in the "Reliques." It is, however, mainly indebted for its celebrity, to the fact that it is quoted by Shakespeare, in the second part of "Henry IV." The authorship is attributed by Ritson to Thomas Deloney. Of its remote antiquity there can be no doubt. The subject is taken from the ancient romance of "King Arthur" (commonly called "Morte d' Arthur"), "being a poetical translation of chapters cviii., cix., cx., in Part I., as they stand in Edition 1634, quarto."

Sir Lancelot was high in fame among the knights of King Arthur's Round Table. To this "Round Table" were attached twenty-four knights,—the chosen few of King Arthur's forces. It appears to have originated with Uther Pendragon, the father of the great monarch of romance, "for whom it had been made by the sorcerer Merlin, in token of the roundness of the world." Every knight had his appointed seat, upon which his name was inscribed in letters of gold. One of these was "the seige perillous," reserved for the most famous champion of the invincible band. High birth, great strength, activity and skill, fearless valour, and firm fidelity to their suzerain, were indispensably requisite for admission into this order. We quote from Mr. Ellis—("Specimens of early English Metrical Romances"):—"They were bound by oath to assist each other, at the hazard of their own lives; to attempt singly the most perilous adventures; to lead, when necessary, a life of monastic solitude; to fly to arms at the first summons; and never to retire from battle till they had defeated the enemy, unless, when night intervened and separated the combatants." The mirror of them all was, of course, King Arthur himself; but his knights were equally renowned for courtesy and indomitable courage: each of them was "a hero," the perfection of chivalry, the love of ladies, and the terror of evil doers—especially giants Of one giant it is particularly recorded that he wore a cloak of fur—the fur being composed of the beards of slaughtered kings; but as there was still a little space left unoccupied, he desired to fill it by a contribution from the chin of King Arthur, and transmitted a fitting messenger with an order that it should be forwarded forthwith, "or els he wolde enter his landes and brenn and slay."—"Well," said King Arthur, "thou hast said thy message, which is the most villanous and lewdest message that ever man heard sent to a King!"

The history of Sir Lancelot is the very perfection of romance. He was the son of "King Ban," who, having been attacked by his inveterate enemy, King Claudas, escaped with his queen and child, to solicit the aid of King Arthur, but died of grief on the way. His unhappy lady abandoned, for a moment, the care of her infant, to attend her dying husband, and, on seeking to resume her charge, found him in the arms of a nymph, who, on the mother's approach, suddenly sprang with the little

Lancelot into an adjoining lake, and instantly disappeared. This nymph was the beautiful Vivian, the mistress of the enchanter Merlin. In her home beneath the waters, the future hero was educated—hence he was afterwards distinguished by the name of Lancelot du Lac. When he had attained the age of eighteen, she conveyed her pupil to the court of King Arthur, demanding his admission to the honour of knighthood, which he, of course, obtained. Through all his after life, this Lady of the Lake continued to be his guardian. And this life was full of adventure; "cleaving down numberless giants;" giving freedom to hosts of prisoners; restoring, by force of arms, the reputations of bevies of fair ladies;—in short, rendering himself worthy the eloquent eulogy of his brave companion in arms, Sir Bohort, as recorded in one of the many romances to which his career has given birth;—"And now I dare say that,—Sir Lancelot,—ther thou lyist,—thou were never matched of none earthly knighte's hands. And thou were the curteist knighte that ever bare shielde. And thou were the truest freende to thy lover that ever bestrode horse. And thou were the truest lover, of a synful man, that ever loved woman. And thou were the kindest man that ever stroke with sworde. And thou were the goodliest person that ever came among presse of knightes. And thou were the meekest man, and the gentillest, that ever eate in hal, among ladies. And thou were the sternest knighte to thy mortall foe that ever put spere in the rest!"

In the chapel of Winchester Castle is preserved what is affirmed to be "King Arthur's Round Table." It consists of a stout oak board, perforated by many bullets, supposed to have been fired at it by Cromwell's soldiers, who used it for a target. Upon it, is painted a royal figure seated beneath a canopy, intended to represent King Arthur. In the centre is painted a large rose, and around it are the words, "Thys is the rounde table of King Arthur, and of his valyant knyghtes." From the centre, radiate twenty-four spaces, each one appropriated to a knight, who seated himself in front of the one that had his name painted on it. This table was, at one time, believed to have been made and placed here by Arthur himself; it is, however, now, considered to be no older than, though quite as old as, the time of Stephen, in whose reign, and during the twelfth century, knights usually assembled at a table of this kind, to avoid disputes about precedency. From this usage the tournaments themselves obtained the name of the "Round Table," and are so called in the records of old times.



The earliest mention of this table is to be found in "the Prologue" to Caxton's "Booke of the Noble Historyes of Kynge Arthur, and of Certeyn of his Knyghtes" (1485), in which he declares, that "in the castle of Dover ye may see Sir Gawaine's skull, and Cradoke's mantle; *at Winchester, the Round Table;* in other places, Sir Launcelot's sword, and many other things." When the Emperor Charles V. was in England, it was exhibited to him as the veritable table of King Arthur, by Henry VIII. Paulus Jovius, who relates this visit, declares that many marks of its antiquity had been destroyed; that the names of the knights were then just written afresh; and the table with its ornaments newly repaired.



HEN Arthur first in court began,
And was approved king,
By force of armes great victorys won,
And conquest home did bring.

Then into Britain straight hee came,
Where fifty good and able
Knights, then repaired unto him,
Which were of the Round Table :

Ed. Corbould, del. Linton, sc.



And many justs and turnaments,
Before him there were prest,
Wherein these knights did then excell
And far surmount the rest;

But one Sir Lancelot du Lake,
Who was approved well,
Hee, in his fights and deeds of armes,
All others did excell.

When hee had rested him a while,
To play, and game, and sport;
Hee thought hee wold approve himselfe
In some adventurous sort.

Hee armèd rode in forrest wide,
And met a damsell faire,
Who told him of adventures great,
Wherto hee gave good eare.

'Such wold I find,' quoth Lancelot:
'For that cause came I hither.'
'Thou seemst, quoth shee,' 'a knight full good,
And I will bring thee thither,

Whereas a mighty knight doth dwell,
That now is of great fame;
Therfore tell me what knight thou art,
And what may bee thy name.'

'My name is Lancelot du Lake.'
Quoth shee, 'it likes me, then;
Here dwelles a knight who never was
O'er-matcht of any man:

Who hath in prison threescore knights
And four, that hee hath bound;
Knights of King Arthurs court they bee,
And of the Table Round.



Shee brought him to a river then,
And also to a tree
Whereon a copper bason hung,
His fellows shields to see.

Hee struck soe hard, the bason broke:—
When Tarquine heard the sound,
Hee drove a horse before him straight,
Whereon a knight was bound.

'Sir knight,' then sayd Sir Lancelot,
'Bring me that horse-load hither,
And lay him downe, and let him rest;
We 'll try our force together;

For, as I understand, thou hast,
As far as thou art able,
Done great despite and shame unto
The knights of the Round Table.'

'If thou art of the Table Round,
Quoth Tarquine speedilye,
Both thee and all thy fellowship
I utterly defye.'

'That's over much,' quoth Lancelot tho,
'Defend thee by and by!'
They sett their spurs unto their steeds,
And each at other flie.

They coucht their speares, (their horses ran,
As though there had been thunder)
And each struck then upon their shields,
Wherewith they brake asunder.

Their horses backes brake under them;
The knights they were astound:
To avoyd their horses they made haste
To fight upon the ground.



They tooke them to their shields full fast,
Their swords they drew out then;
Wyth mighty strokes most eagerlye
One at the other ran.

They wounded were, and bled full sore,
For breath they both did stand;
And leaning on their swords awhile,
Quoth Tarquine, 'Hold thy hand,

And tell to me what I shall aske.'—
'Say on,'—quoth Lancelot tho:
'Thou art,' quoth Tarquine, 'the best knight
That ever I did know;

And like a knight that I did hate:
Soe that thou bee not hee,
I will deliver all the rest,
And eke accord wyth thee.'

'That is well said,' quoth Lancelot;
But sith it soe must bee,
What knight is that thou hatest soe?
I pray thee show to me.'

'His name's Sir Lancelot du Lake,
Hee slew my brother deere;
Him I suspect of all the rest:
I wold I had him here.'

'Thy wish thou hast, but now unknowne;
I am Lancelot du Lake,
Now of King Arthurs Table Round;
King Hands son of Benwake;

And I defye thee;—do thy worst.'
'Ha, ha!' quoth Tarquine tho,
'One of us two shall end our lives
Before that we do go.

Sir Lancelot du Lake.



If thou bee Lancelot du Lake,
Then welcome shalt thou bee :
Wherfore see thou thyself defend,
For now defye I thee.'

They buckled then together so,
Like unto wild boares rashing ;
And wyth theire swords and shields they ran
At one another slashing :

The ground besprinkled was wyth blood :
Tarquine began to faint ;
For hee had backt and bore his shield
So low, hee did repent.*

* Several of the ancient ballads record similar fights between giants and the knights of King Arthur's Round Table. An "Ancient English Metrical Romance," printed by Ritson, entitled "Sir Ywaine and Sir Gawin," describes an encounter which led to a like result,—the delivering from prison sundry "fellowes" who, by the gallantry of their brother-in-arms, were "out of bales broght." We copy a few passages :—

Syr Ywaine rade into the playne,
And the geant cum hym ogayne :—
His levore was ful grete and lang,
And himself ful mekyl and strang.
He said, 'What devil made the so balde
For to cum heder out of thi halde?
Who-so-ever the heder send
Lufed the litel, so God me mend!
Of the he wald be wroken fayn.'
'Do forth thi best!' said Sir Ywaine.

* * * * *

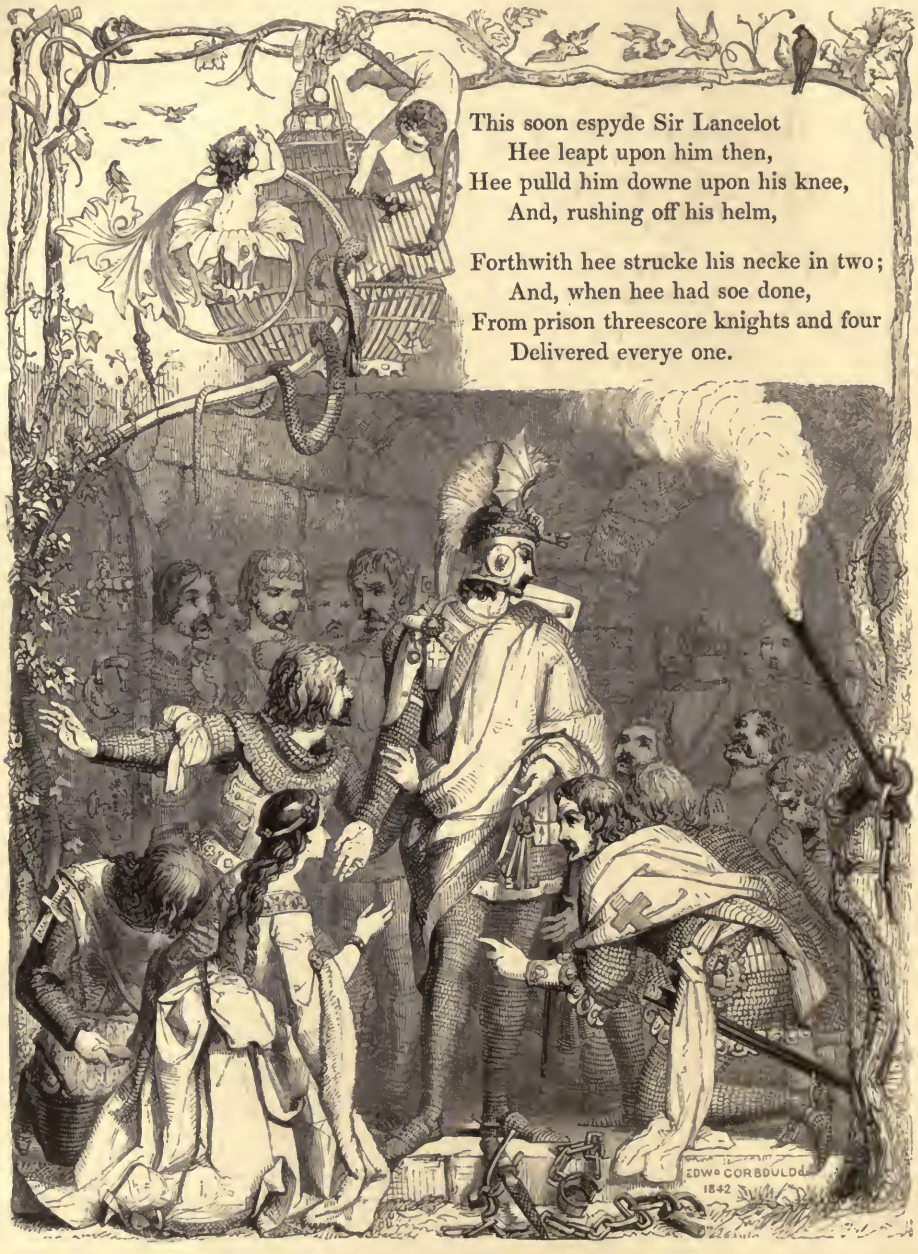
Sir Ywaine left his sper of hand,
And strake obout him with his brand;
And the geant, mekil of main,
Strake ful fast to him ogayn.

* * * * *

Sethen with a stroke to him he stert,
And smate the geant unto the hert;
Ther was none other tale to tell,
Bot fast unto the earth he fell,
Als it had bene a hevy tre.
Then might men in the kastel se
Ful mekil mirth on ilka side,
The yates kest thai open wyde.

* * * * *

Sir Lancelot du Lake.



Ed. Corbould, del. Smith, sc.

KING ARTHUR and the Knights of his Round Table are familiar to all lovers of old romance. But to the chroniclers in rhyme, who made their own "Histories," he is indebted not only for his fame, but, probably, for his existence; although Ritson is bitterly wrath with a "mendacious" scribbler, who presumed to doubt the actual being of this "Kyng of Englonde." The fabulous "HISTORY" of Geoffrey of Monmouth, published about the middle of the twelfth century, is the undoubted source upon which the minstrels of after ages drew so largely. If there were "romances and ballads on the same subject" anterior to his time, they have not descended to us; and there is no evidence to support his assertion that the story was translated by him from a very ancient book. The general impression is that it was a pure invention of the "historian." It is, however, romantic, exciting, and interesting to the highest degree; and amply merits its renown, whether "founded on fact," or a mere fiction. Arthur was the son of Uther Pendragon, King of Britain; and the mystery of his life commenced with his birth, his father having been introduced to his mother by the interposition of the famous enchanter, Merlin, in the semblance of one whose form it was criminal to have assumed. The royal birth of the boy was kept a profound secret from himself and all others; he was reared in comparative obscurity, and it was not until after the death of Uther, and consequent disputes concerning a successor to the Crown, under a belief of "his line" being extinct, that Merlin thought fit to produce the legal and rightful heir to the vacant throne. The mode he selected, was in itself a boon of magnitude to after Romancers. He advised the rival candidates to postpone the contest until some especial manifestation of Omnipotent Will should determine their decree. The proposal having been agreed to, almost immediately a huge stone was discovered, into which was firmly fixed a naked sword—the far-famed Excalibar—indicating that whoever should draw it forth should be elected sovereign of the Britons by the universal voice. The feat was, of course, performed by young Arthur, who was crowned "in Cardvile that noble town."

Thenceforward, his career was one of entire conquest, either upon a huge scale, or in single combats: nothing earthly could withstand the prowess of his stalwart arm; and against the powers of darkness he was fully armed and accoutred by his friend and counsellor, Merlin. He proceeds from victory to victory; conquering kingdom after kingdom; slaying giants innumerable; rescuing distressed damsels; destroying "wicked witches;" cutting off whole armies of Paynims and Saracens, and making no more of dragons than greyhounds do of hares;—sometimes killing wholesale when alone and unsupported, but, more usually, in company with the Knights of his Round Table. The death of Arthur was mysterious as his birth, and marvellous as his life. The particulars are fully recorded in the appended ballad. Long after his passage from earth his return to it was looked for. It is "believed by the vulgar that he still lives, and is to come hereafter to restore the dispersed and exiled Britons to their own;" agreeably to a prophecy of Merlin—who "sayd that his death shall be doubteous; and sayd soth, for men therof yet have doubte, and shalle for ever more; for men wyt not whether that

he lyveth or is dede." Witness, also, this epitaph in the "monasterial church of Glasinberi:"—

"Hic jacet Arthurus, rex quondam atque futurus."

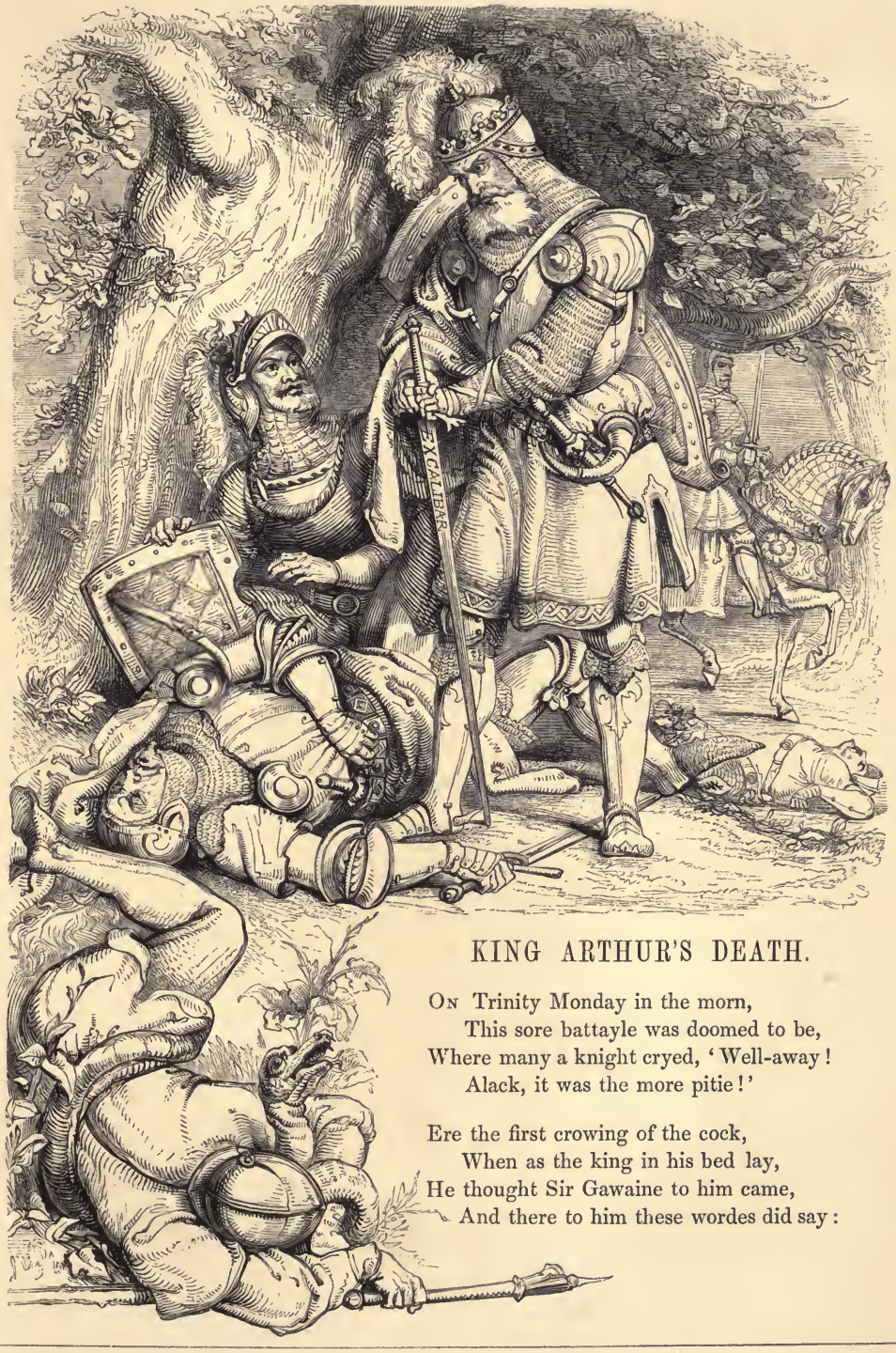
Selden, in his Illustrations to Drayton's "Poly-Olbion," gives a very interesting account of the discovery of Arthur's tomb. The exhumation took place in 1189; and Giraldus affirms, that the leg bone of Arthur was three fingers' length taller than that of the tallest man present at the opening of the sepulchre. This statement he received from the abbot, who superintended the search. An engraving of the cross is to be seen in "Camden's Britannia:" upon it is inscribed:—

"Hic jacet sepultus inclitus rex Arturius, in insula Avalonia."

It has also been engraved in Whitaker's "History of Manchester;" a copy of which work, formerly in the possession of Ritson, and filled with marginal remarks, has the following on this subject by that pains-taking and accurate antiquary; he says: "to humour Henry's attachment to the memory and character of Arthur, most of the romances of the Round Table were written and composed during his reign, and at his particular instance, and many Armorican lays, relating to him, translated. The lying Bards too, set up a prophetic knowledge as to the site of his tomb, and the crafty and politic monks of Glastonbury aided and completed the deception. As the traditional actions of Arthur were of a gigantic nature, the popular opinion had made a giant of his person, and therefore the crafty monks, to accredit the silly forgery, made use of horses bones." The skull reported to be Arthur's, he also seems to think, was *adapted* to the discovery. There were marks of 10 wounds in the head, and one mortal gash, intended, he says, "for the identical gash or hole that was made in it by his nephew, Mordred." The skulls remained at Glastonbury until the Reformation. We copy the wood-cut representation of King Arthur and his Knights, seated at their Round Table, from their "most ancient and famous History" (1534; a reprint of the edition issued from the press of our first printer, Caxton, in 1485). It is curious as displaying the idea formed by our ancestors of the Round Table, and the manner in which Arthur and his Knights were seated at it.



The subjoined ballad is copied from Bishop Percy, who extracted it from his "Manuscript folio;" giving to it "some conjectural emendations, and even a supplement of three or four stanzas, composed from the romance of MORTE D' ARTHUR,"—the original MS. of which exists in the Harleian Library in the British Museum. The substance of it is given by Mr. Ellis in his "SPECIMENS OF EARLY METRICAL ROMANCES."



KING ARTHUR'S DEATH.

On Trinity Monday in the morn,
This sore battayle was doomed to be,
Where many a knight cryed, 'Well-away!
Alack, it was the more pitie!'

Ere the first crowing of the cock,
When as the king in his bed lay,
He thought Sir Gawaine to him came,
And there to him these wordes did say:

Franklin, del

Green, sc.



'Now, as you are mine unkle dear,
And as you prize your life, this day,
O meet not with your foe in fight;
Put off the battayle, if ye may;

For Sir Launcelot is now in Fraunce,
And with him many an hardy knight,
Who will within this moneth be back,
And will assist ye in the fight.'

The king then called his nobles all,
Before the breaking of the day;
And told them how Sir Gawaine came,
And there to him these wordes did say.

His nobles all this counsayle gave,
That earlye in the morning, he
Shold send away an herauld at armes,
To ask a parley fair and free.

Then twelve good knightes King Arthur chose,
The best of all that with him were,
To parley with the foe in field,
And make with him agreement fair.

The king he charged all his host,
In readiness there for to be;
But no man shold no weapon sturre,
Unless a sword drawn they shold see.

And Mordred on the other part,
Twelve of his knights did likewise bring;
The best of all his company,
To hold the parley with the king.

Sir Mordred also charged his host,
In readiness there for to be;
But no man shold no weapon sturre,
But if a sword drawn they shold see.



For he durst not his unkle trust,
Nor he his nephew, sothe to tell:
Alack! it was a woefull case,
As ere in Christentye befell!

But when they were together met,
And both to fair accordance brought,
And a months league between them set
Before the battayle shold be fought,

An adder crept forth of a bush,
Stung one o' th' king's knights on the knee;
Alack! it was a woefull chance,
As ever was in Christentye!

When the knight found him wounded sore,
And saw the wild-worm hanging there;
His sword he from his scabberd drew:
A piteous case, as ye shall hear.

For when the two hostes saw the sword,
They joyned battayle instanlye;
Till of so many noble knights,
On one side there were left but three!

For all were slain that durst abide,
And but some few that fled away:
Ay me! it was a bloody field
As ere was fought on summers day!

Upon King Arthurs own partye,
Only himself escaped there,
And Lukyn Duke of Gloster free,
And the kings butler Bedevere.

And when the king beheld his knights,
All dead and scattered on the mold,
The teares fast trickled down his face;
That manly face in fight so bold!



'Now rest ye all, brave knights,' he said,
'So true and faithful to your trust:
And must ye then, ye valiant hearts,
Be left to moulder into dust!

Most loyal have ye been to me,
Most true and faithful unto death:
And, oh! to rayse ye up again,
How freely could I yield my breath!

But see, the traitor's yet alive,
Lo where he stalks among the dead!
Now bitterlye he shall abye;
And vengeance fall upon his head.'

'O stay, my liege,' then sayd the duke;
'O stay for love and charitie;
Remember what the vision spake,
Nor meet your foe, if it may be.'

'O stay me not, thou worthy wight,
This debt my loyal knights I owe:
Betide me life, betide me death,
I will avenge them of their foe.'

Then strait he grasped his trusty spear,
And on his horse then mounted he:
As his butler holpe him to his horse,
His bowels gushed to his knee.

'Alas!' then sayd the noble king,
'That I should live this sight to see!
To see this good knight here be slain,
All for his love in helping me!'

He put his spear into his rest,
And to Sir Mordred loud gan cry;
'Now set thyself upon thy guard,
For, traitor, now thy death is nye.'



Sir Mordred lifted up his sword,
And fierce to meet the king ran he;
The king his spear he through him thrust;
A fathom thorow his bodie.

When Mordred felt the stroke of death,
And found that he was wounded so,
He thrust himself upon the spear,
And struck the king a deadly blow.

Then grimly dyed Sir Mordred,
Presently upon that tree;
And bloody streams ran from the king,
Ere to the duke returned he.*

Sir Lukyn then he thus bespake,
'Sir knight thou hast been faithfull tryde,
Now take my sword Excalibar,
That hangs so freely by my syde:

O take my sword Excalibar,
And there into the river throw;
For here, henceforth, benethe this tree,
All use of weapons I forego.

* Percy has printed also a ballad, entitled "The Legend of King Arthur," from his "ancient folio manuscript," in which the king relates his own history, describes the battle in which he fell, and mourns over his fate. Reference is thus made to the contest with Sir Mordred:—

And still I him pursued with speed
Till at the last wee mett:
Whereby an appointed day of fight
Was there agreed and sett.

Where we did fight, of mortal life
Eche other to deprive,
Till of a hundred thousand men
Scarce one was left alive.

There all the noble chivalrye
Of Brittaine tooke their end.
O see how fickle is their state
That doe on feates depend!



And fare thee well, thou trusty sword,
A better neer had valiant knight,
With thee full oft, and many a day,
Have I withstood my foe in fight.

With this good fauchion in my hand,
Oft have I reapd the bloody feelde;
But now the fatalle hour is come,
That never more I may thee weelde.'

The duke to the river side he went,
And there his own sword in threw he;
But he kept back Excalibar,
He kept it back in privitie.

For all of coleyne was the blade,
And all the hilt of precious stone:
'And ever alack!' then sayd the knight,
'Must such a sword away be thrown?'

Then back he came unto the king,
Who sayd, 'Sir Lukyn, what did ye see?'
'Nothing, my liege, save that the wind
Blew o'er the waters fair and free.'

'O go again,' then said the king,
'O good Sir Lukyn, go again;
Into the river throw my sword,
Nor keep me lingering here in pain.'

The duke then to the river went,
And the kings scabberd in threw he;
But he kept back Excalibar,
And hid it underneth a tree.

Then back he came to tell the king,
Who sayd, 'Sir Lukyn, saw ye ought?'—
'Nothing, my liege, save that the wind
Now with the angry waters fought.'



'O Lukyn, Lukyn!' said the king,
'Twice hast thou dealt deceitfully:
Alack, whom may we ever trust,
When such a knight so false can be?

Say, wouldst thou have thy master dead,
All for a sword that wins thine eye?
Now go again, and throw it in,
Or here the one of us shall dye.'

The duke, all shent with this rebuke,
No aunswer made unto the king;
But to the river took the sword,
And threw it far as he could fling.

A hand and arm did meet the sword,
And flourishd three times in the air;
Then sunk benethe the renning streme,
And of the duke was seen no mair.*

* In the romance of "Morte D'Arthur," as given by Mr. Ellis—"Specimens of Early English Metrical Romances"—this incident is thus recorded:—The knight having at length thrown into the water the good sword Excalibar,—

There came an hand, withouten rest,
Out of the water, and fair it hent,
And brandished as it should brast,
And sithe, as gleam away it went.

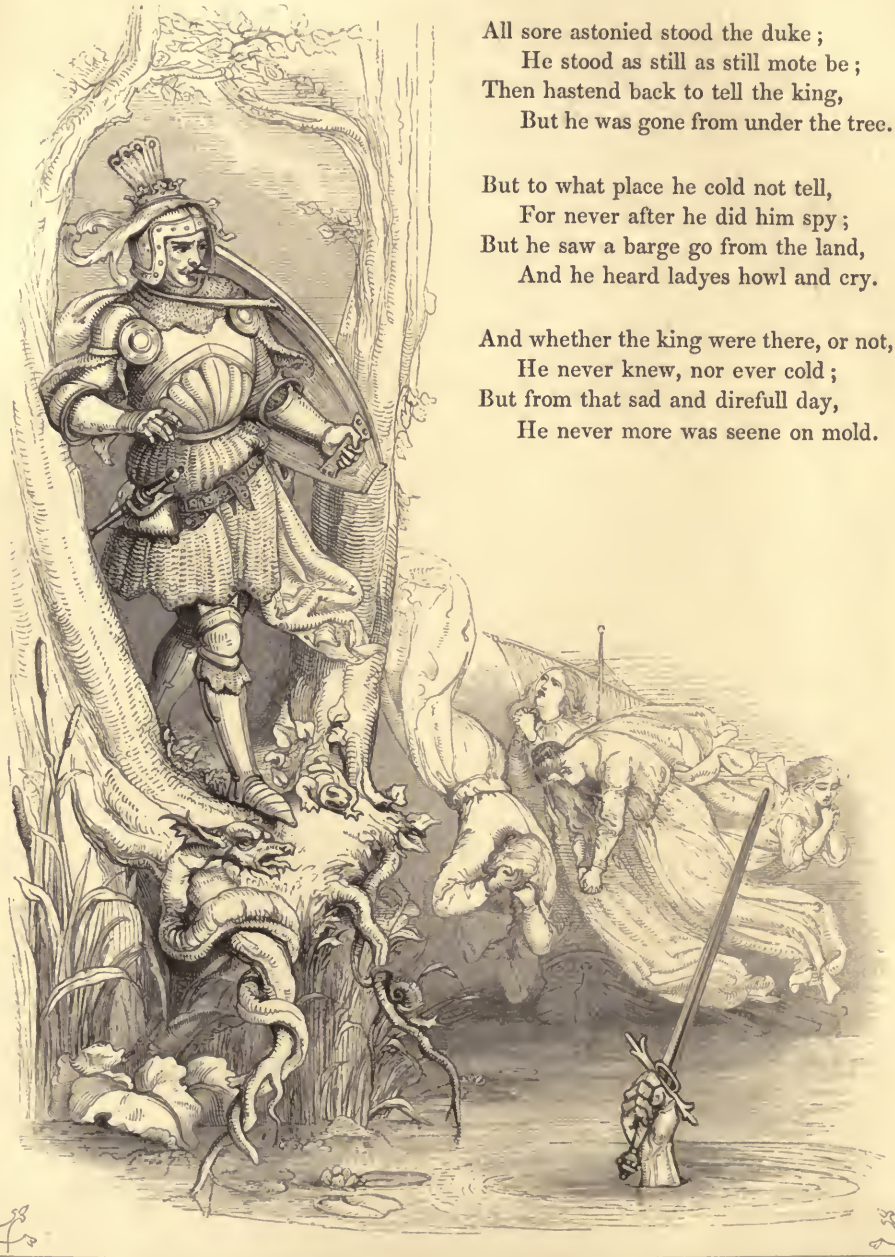
To the king again went he there,
And said, 'lief, sir, I saw a hand;
Out of the water it came all bare,
And thrice brandished that rich brand.'

'Help me! soon were I thore!'
He led his lord unto the strand;
A rich ship with masts and oar,
Full of ladies there they fand.

The ladies that were fair and free,
Courteously the king gan they fong;
And one that brightest was of blee,
Weeped sore and handes wrung.

'Brother,' she said, 'woe is me,
From leeching hast thou been too long;
I wot that greatly grieveth me,
For thy painis are full strong.'

King Arthur's Death.



All sore astonied stood the duke;
He stood as still as still mote be;
Then hastend back to tell the king,
But he was gone from under the tree.

But to what place he cold not tell,
For never after he did him spy;
But he saw a barge go from the land,
And he heard ladyes howl and cry.

And whether the king were there, or not,
He never knew, nor ever cold;
But from that sad and direfull day,
He never more was seene on mold.

Franklin, del

Armstrong, sc.

THE HEIRE OF LINNE. This ballad we copy from the "Reliques of Ancient English Poetry." Dr. Percy states that he "found it" in his folio MS.; and that he had inserted "supplemental stanzas," necessary in consequence of the "breaches and defects" which existed in his fragment. "These," he adds, "it is hoped the reader will pardon, as, indeed, the completion of the story was suggested by a modern ballad on a similar subject." It is much to be lamented that the "modern ballad" has not been more distinctly pointed out: it does not appear in any collection; nor are we acquainted with the copy to which reference is made.* Dr. Percy considers that, "from the Scottish phrases here and there, it would seem to have been originally composed beyond the Tweed;" and, he observes, "the Heir of Linne seems not to have been a Lord of Parliament, but a laird, whose title went along with the estate." Of the Scottish origin of the ballad, there can be little doubt. Mr. R. Chambers, indeed, prints three stanzas of a homely version, still current in Scotland:—

The bonnie heir, the weel faured heir,
And the weary heir of Linne;
Yonder he stands at his father's gate,
And naebody bids him come in:

O see where he stands, and see where he gangs,
The weary heir o' Linne!
O see where he stands on the cauld causey,
Some ane wald taen him in.

But if he had been his father's heir,
Or yet the heir o' Linne,
He wadna stand on the cauld causey,
Some ane wald taen him in.

* All readers of the "Reliques of Ancient English Poetry" will regret that the learned "Editor"—for so he has chosen to call himself—left us in ignorance as to the extent of the alterations to which he subjected the "fragments" he found in his "folio MS." The fault, however, is not attributable to him; for, when attacked by Ritson with a degree of bitterness that approached ferocity, and when the existence of the original source was somewhat more than doubted, by less ungenerous commentators, the book was left "for a whole year" at the house of Mr. Nicholls, where "it was examined, with more or less attention, by many gentlemen of eminence in literature." In an advertisement to the fourth edition of the "Reliques," Dr. Percy thus describes the volume:—

"The MS. is a long, narrow, folio volume, containing 195 Sonnets, Ballads, Historical Songs and Metrical Romances, either in the whole or in part, for many of them are extremely mutilated and imperfect. The first and last leaves are wanting; and of fifty-four pages near the beginning, half of every leaf hath been torn away, and several others are injured towards the end; besides that, through a great part of the volume, the top or bottom line, and sometimes both, have been cut off in the binding. In this state is the MS. itself: and even where the leaves have suffered no injury, the transcripts, which seem to have been all made by one person (they are, at least, all in the same kind of hand), are sometimes extremely incorrect and faulty, being in such instances probably made from defective copies, or the imperfect recitation of illiterate singers; so that a considerable portion of the song or narrative is sometimes omitted; and miserable trash or nonsense not unfrequently introduced into pieces of considerable merit."

A reprint of this singular collection might be an invaluable gift to the public, from one of the "Societies"—the object in forming which is, to extend the knowledge to be derived from "scarce books," not sufficiently interesting to the "mass" to justify their republication through the ordinary channels. And if, at the same time, a selection were given from the Pepysian collection, a vast addition would be made to our national store of veritable ancient Ballads. The Pepysian volumes —five in number—omitting those that are merely political, and such as ought not to be reprinted—would, however, supply very few important additions to the wealth of which we are at present possessed.

This fragment of the ancient ballad—probably the original out of which Percy formed his more complete work—is all that Mr. Chambers was able to obtain. But Mr. Buchan—an indefatigable collector of old ballads, from the lips of aged crones—procured a much more perfect copy of the poem, of which Mr. Chambers has given a fragment.* It consists of but fourteen stanzas; and the incidents bear only a general resemblance to those recorded by Dr. Percy; the spendthrift youth asks and receives bread and wine from a "nourice," whom he promises to repay when he is Heir of Linne; and the straits to which he has been reduced, are indicated by his begging charity from gentlemen at feasts, and fishermen at market. The change that takes place in his fortune is thus described:—

'Gie me twa sheaves o' your bread, Nourice,
And ae glass o' your wine;
And I will pay you them back again
The day I 'm heir o' Linne.'

'Ye's get three sheaves o' my bread, Willie,
And twa glass o' my wine,
But I 'll be paid when the seas gang dry,
For ye 'll ne'er be heir o' Linne.'

* * * *

As Willie was sitting ane day alane,
And nae body him wi';
He minded on a little wee key
His mither to him did gie:
Bade him never open a lock wi' it
Ere the greatest strait he could see.

Then he did spy a little wee lock,
And the key gied linking in;
And he got goud and money therein
To pay the lands o' Linne.

* * * *

As Willie he gied down the town,
His hose aboon his sheen;
But, when that he came up again,
Was convoyed by lords fifteen.

When Willie he came to the ha',
There he cried wonderous crouse;
He call'd the May afore them a',
The Nourice o' the house.

'Come down, come down, Nourice,' he said,
'Ere I pay you your bread and wine;
For ye will be paid ere the seas gang dry,
For this day I 'm heir of Linne.'

In later editions of the "Reliques," Dr. Percy restored several "ancient readings from the folio MS." In the absence of more satisfactory evidence, these changes are interesting, as affording, in some degree, the means of judging as to the nature and extent of the "emendations" which occur, more or less, in every ballad printed by the accomplished prelate. The curious in such matter will, therefore, perhaps, not consider our space ill-occupied in noticing some of them. In the first edition of the "Reliques," we read in line 59 of Part II, "stint ne stayed" for "ceasd ne blanne;" in line 63, "at the bordes end" for "upon a rowe;" in lines 65, 66,

And then bespake the Heire of Linne,
To John o' the Scales then louted he.

The last verse but two does not appear in the first edition, and the ballad, in that edition, thus concludes:—

'When next I want to sell my land,
Good John o' the Scales I'le come to thee.'

* Mr. Buchan's Ballad "The Weary Heir of Linne," is not yet published; it forms one of a large and singular collection he has prepared for the Press, and which we hope will be given to the world at no very remote period. Of his printed collection—"Ancient Ballads and Songs of the North of Scotland, hitherto unpublished"—Sir Walter Scott has spoken in the highest terms; describing it as "the most complete collection that has yet appeared;" and characterising the collector as "a person of indefatigable research,"—"whose industry has been crowned with the most successful results."



THE HEIRE OF LINNE.

PART THE FIRST.

Lithe and listen, gentlemen,
To sing a song I will beginne;
It is of a lord of faire Scotland,
Which was the unthrifty heire of Linne.

His father was a right good lord,
His mother a lady of high degree;
But they, alas! were dead, him froe,
And he lovd keeping companie.

To spend the daye with merry cheare,
To drinke and revell every night,
To card and dice from eve to morne,
It was, I ween, his hearts delighte.



To ride, to runne, to rant, to roare,
To alwaye spend and never spare,
I wott, an' it were the king himselfe,
Of golde and fee he mote be bare.

Soe fares the unthrifty Lord of Linne
Till all his golde is gone and spent;
And he maun sell his landes so broad,
His house, and landes, and all his rent.

His father had a keen stewarde,
And John o' the Scales was called he;
But John is become a gentel-man,
And John has gott both golde and fee.

Sayes, 'Welcome, welcome, Lord of Linne,
Let nought disturb thy merry cheare;
If thou wilt sell thy landes soe broad,
Good store of golde Ile give thee heere.'

'My golde is gone, my money is spent;
My lande nowe take it unto thee:
Give me the golde, good John o' the Scales,
And thine for aye my lande shall be.'

Then John he did him to record draw,
And John he cast him a gods-pennie;
But for every pounde that John agreed,
The lande, I wis, was well worth three.

Hee told him the golde upon the borde,
He was right glad his lande to winne:
'The golde is thine, the lande is mine,
And nowe Ile be the Lord of Linne.'

Thus he hath sold his lande soe broad,
Both hill and holt, and moore and fenne,
All but a poore and lonesome lodge,
That stood far off in a lonely glenne.

The Heire of Linne.



For soe he to his father hight.
'My sonne, when I am gonne,' sayd he,
'Then thou wilt spend thy lande so broad,
And thou wilt spend thy golde so free;

But sweare me nowe upon the roode,
That lonesome lodge thou 'lt never spend;
For when all the world doth frown on thee,
Thou there shalt find a faithful friend.'

The heire of Linne is full of golde;
'And come with me, my friends,' sayd he,
'Let 's drinke, and rant, and merry make,
And he that spares, ne'er mote he thee.'

They ranted, drank, and merry made,
Till all his golde it waxed thinne;
And then his friendes they slunk away;
They left the unthrifty heire of Linne.

He had never a penny left in his purse,
Never a penny left but three,
And one was brass, another was lead,
And another it was white money.

'Nowe well-a-day,' sayd the heire of Linne,
'Nowe well-a-day, and woe is me,
For when I was the Lord of Linne,
I never wanted golde nor fee.

But many a trustye friend have I,
And why shold I feel dole or care?
Ile borrow of them all by turnes,
Soe need I not be never bare.'

But one, I wis, was not at home;
Another had payd his golde away;
Another calld him thriftless loone,
And bade him sharpely wend his way.



'Nowe well-a-day,' sayd the heire of Linne,
'Nowe well-a-day, and woe is me!
For when I had my landes soe broad,
On me they livd right merrilee.

To beg my bread from door to door
I wis, it were a brenning shame;
To rob and steal it were a sinne;
To worke my limbs I cannot frame.

Nowe Ile away to lonesome lodge,
For there my father bade me wend;
When all the world shold frown on me,
I there shold find a trusty friend.'

PART THE SECOND.

Away then hyed the heire of Linne
O'er hill and holt, and moore and fenne,
Untill he came to lonesome lodge
That stood soe lowe in a lonely glenne.

Hee looked up, hee looked downe,
In hope some comfort for to winne;
But bare and lothly were the walles:
'It 's sorry chear,' quo' the heire of Linne.

The little windowe dim and darke
Was hung with ivy, brere, and yewe;
No shimmering sunne heere ever shone;
No halesome breeze heere ever blew.

No chair, ne table he mote spye,
No chearful hearth, ne welcome bed;
Nought save a rope with renning noose,
That dangling hung up o'er his head.

And over it, in broad letters,
These words were written soe plain to see:
'Ah! gracelesse wretch, hast spent thine all,
And brought thyself to penurie?



All this my boding mind misgave,
I therefore left this trustye friend:
Let it now sheeld thy foule disgrace,
And all thy shame and sorrowes end.'

Sorely shent wi' this rebuke,
Sorely shent was the heire of Linne;
His heart, I wis, was near to brast
With guilt and sorrowe, shame and sinne.

Never a word spake the heire of Linne,
Never a word he spake but three:
'This is a trustye friend indeed,
And is right welcome unto me.'

Then round his necke the corde he drewe,
And sprang aloft with his bodie;
When lo! the ceiling burst in twaine,
And to the ground came tumbling he.

Astonyed lay the heire of Linne,
Ne knewe if he were live or dead:
At length he looked, and sawe a bille,
And in it a key of golde so redd.

Hee took the bille, and lookt it on,
Strait good comfort found he there:
It told him of a hole in the wall,
In which there stood three chests in-fere.

Two were full of the beaten golde,
The third was full of white money,
And over them in broad letters
These words were written soe plaine to see:

'Once more, my sonne, I sette thee clere;
Amend thy life and follies past;
For but thou amend thee of thy life,
That rope must be thy end at last.'

The Heire of Linne.



'And let it be,' sayd the heire of Linne,
'And let it be, but if I amend;
For heere I will make mine avow,
This reade shall guide me to the end.'

Away then went with a merry cheare,
Away then went the heire of Linne;
I wis he neither ceasd ne blanne
Till John o' the Scales house he did winne.

And when he came to John o' the Scales,
Up at the speere then looked he;
There sate three lords upon a rowe
Were drinking of the wine soe free.

And John himself sate at the bord-head
Because nowe Lord of Linne was he.
'I pray thee,' he said, 'good John o' the Scales,
One forty pence for to lend me.'

'Away, away, thou thriftless loone!
Away, away, this may not be;
For Christs curse on my head,' he sayd,
'If ever I trust thee one pennie!'

Then bespake the heire of Linne,
To John o' the Scales wife then spake he:
'Madame, some almes on me bestowe,
I pray for sweet Saint Charitie.'

'Away, away, thou thriftless loone!
I swear thou gettest no almes of me;
For if we shold hang any losel heere,
The first we wold beginne with thee.'

Then bespake a good fellowe
Which sat at John o' the Scales his bord;
Sayd, 'Turne againe, thou heire of Linne;
Some time thou wast a well good lord:

E. M. Ward, del. Pastin, sc

The Heire of Linne.



Some time a good fellowe thou hast been,
And sparedst not thy golde and fee;
Therefore Ile lend thee forty pence,
And other forty if need be.

And ever, I pray thee, John o' the Scales,
To let him sit in thy companie;
For well I wott thou hadst his lande,
And a good bargaine it was to thee.'

Up then spake him John o' the Scales,
All wode he answerd him againe:
'Nowe Christs curse on my head,' he sayd,
'But I did lose by that bargaine!

And heere I proffer thee, heire of Linne,
Before these lordes soe faire and free,
Thou shalt have it backe again better cheape
By a hundred markes, than I had it of thee.'

'I drawe you to record, lords;'—he sayd.
With that he caste him a gods-pennie:
'Nowe by my fay!' sayd the heire of Linne,
'And heere, good John, is thy money.'

And he pulled forth three bagges of golde,
And layd them down upon the bord:
All woe begone was John o' the Scales,
Soe shent he cold say never a word.

He told him forth the good redd gold,
He told it forth wi' mickle dinne.
'The golde is thine, the lande is mine,
And now Ime againe the Lord of Linne,'

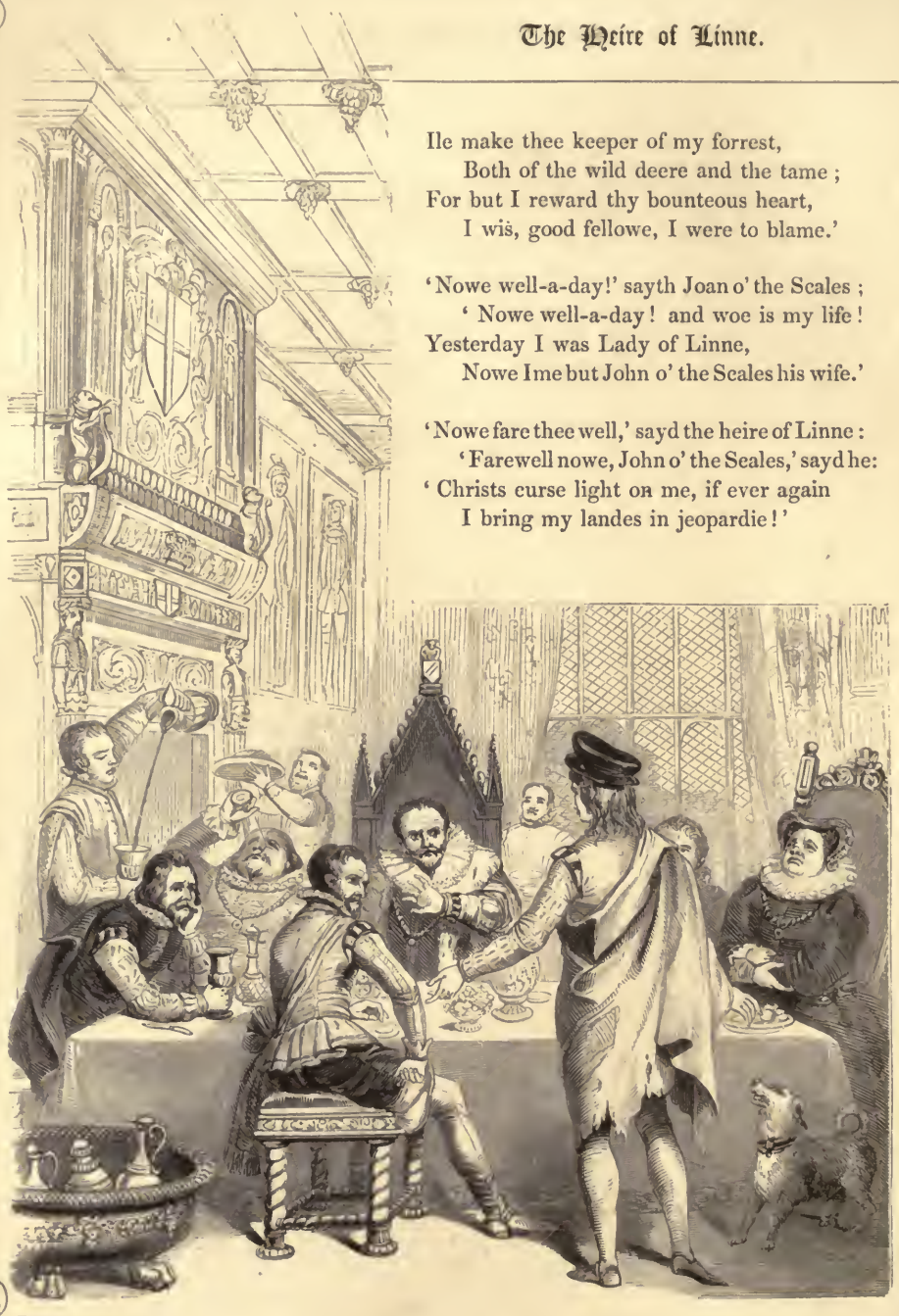
Sayes, 'Have thou heere, thou good fellowe,
Forty pence thou didst lend me:
Nowe I am againe the Lord of Linne,
And forty pounds I will give thee.

The Heire of Linne.

Ile make thee keeper of my forrest,
Both of the wild deere and the tame ;
For but I reward thy bounteous heart,
I wis, good fellowe, I were to blame.'

'Nowe well-a-day!' sayth Joan o' the Scales ;
' Nowe well-a-day ! and woe is my life !
Yesterday I was Lady of Linne,
Nowe I me but John o' the Scales his wife.'

'Nowe fare thee well,' sayd the heire of Linne :
'Farewell nowe, John o' the Scales,' sayd he:
' Christs curse light on me, if ever again
I bring my landes in jeopardie ! '



E. M. Ward, del

Easom, sc.

LORD SOULIS. This ballad is the composition of John Leyden; it was first published in the "Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border," and, subsequently, in the collected works of the estimable and accomplished writer. The hero of the story is supposed to be William Lord Soulis, who was of royal descent, and who entered, with several other nobles of rank, into a conspiracy against Robert de Bruce, the object of which was the elevation of Soulis to the Scottish throne.*

"Local tradition," writes Sir Walter Scott, "more faithful to the popular sentiment than history, has recorded the character of the chief, and attributed to him many actions which seem to correspond with that character. His portrait is by no means flattering; uniting every quality which could render strength formidable, and cruelty detestable. Combining prodigious bodily strength with cruelty, avarice, dissimulation, and treachery, is it surprising that a people, who attributed every event of life, in a great measure, to the interference of good or evil spirits, should have added to such a character the mystical horrors of sorcery? Thus, he is represented as a cruel tyrant and sorcerer; constantly employed in oppressing his vassals, harassing his neighbours, and fortifying his Castle of Hermitage against the King of Scotland; for which purpose he employed all means, human and infernal; invoking the fiends by his incantations, and forcing his vassals to drag materials, like beasts of burden. Tradition proceeds to relate, that the Scottish King, irritated by reiterated complaints peevishly exclaimed to the petitioners, 'Boil him if you please, but let me hear no more of him.' Satisfied with this answer, they proceeded with the utmost haste to execute the commission; which they accomplished by boiling him alive on the Ninestane Rig, in a cauldron, said to have been long preserved at Skelf-hill, a hamlet betwixt Hawick and the Hermitage. Messengers, it is said, were immediately despatched by the King, to prevent the effects of such a hasty declaration; but they only arrived in time to witness the conclusion of the ceremony. The Castle of Hermitage, unable to support the load of iniquity which had been long accumulating within its walls, is supposed to have partly sunk beneath the ground; and its ruins are still regarded by the peasants with peculiar aversion and terror. The door of the chamber, where Lord Soulis is said to have held his conferences with the evil spirits, is supposed to be opened once in seven years, by that demon to which, when he left the castle never to return, he committed the keys, by throwing them over his left shoulder, and desiring it to keep them till his return. Into this chamber, which is really the dungeon of the castle, the peasant is afraid to look; for such is the active

* One of his accomplices, David de Brechin, was executed. He was nephew to the king, and his only crime was his having concealed the treason in which he disdained to participate. "As the people thronged to the execution of the gallant youth, they were bitterly rebuked by Sir Ingram de Umfraville, an English or Norman knight, then a favourite follower of Robert Bruce. 'Why press you,' said he, 'to see the dismal catastrophe of so generous a knight? I have seen ye throng as eagerly around him to share his bounty, as now to behold his death.' With these words he turned from the scene of blood, and, repairing to the king, craved leave to sell his Scottish possessions, and to retire from the country. 'My heart,' said Umfraville, 'will not, for the wealth of the world, permit me to dwell any longer, where I have seen such a knight die by the hands of the executioner.' With the king's leave, he interred the body of David de Brechin, sold his lands, and left Scotland for ever. The story is beautifully told by Barbour, Book 19th."

malignity of its inmate, that a willow inserted at the chinks of the door, is found peeled, or stripped of its bark, when drawn back. The Nine-stane Rig, where Lord Soulis was boiled, is a declivity, about one mile in breadth and four in length, descending upon the Water of Hermitage, from the range of hills which separate Liddesdale and Teviotdale. It derives its name from one of those circles of large stones which are termed Druidical, nine of which remained to a late period. Five of these stones are still visible; and two are particularly pointed out, as those which supported the iron bar, upon which the fatal cauldron was suspended."

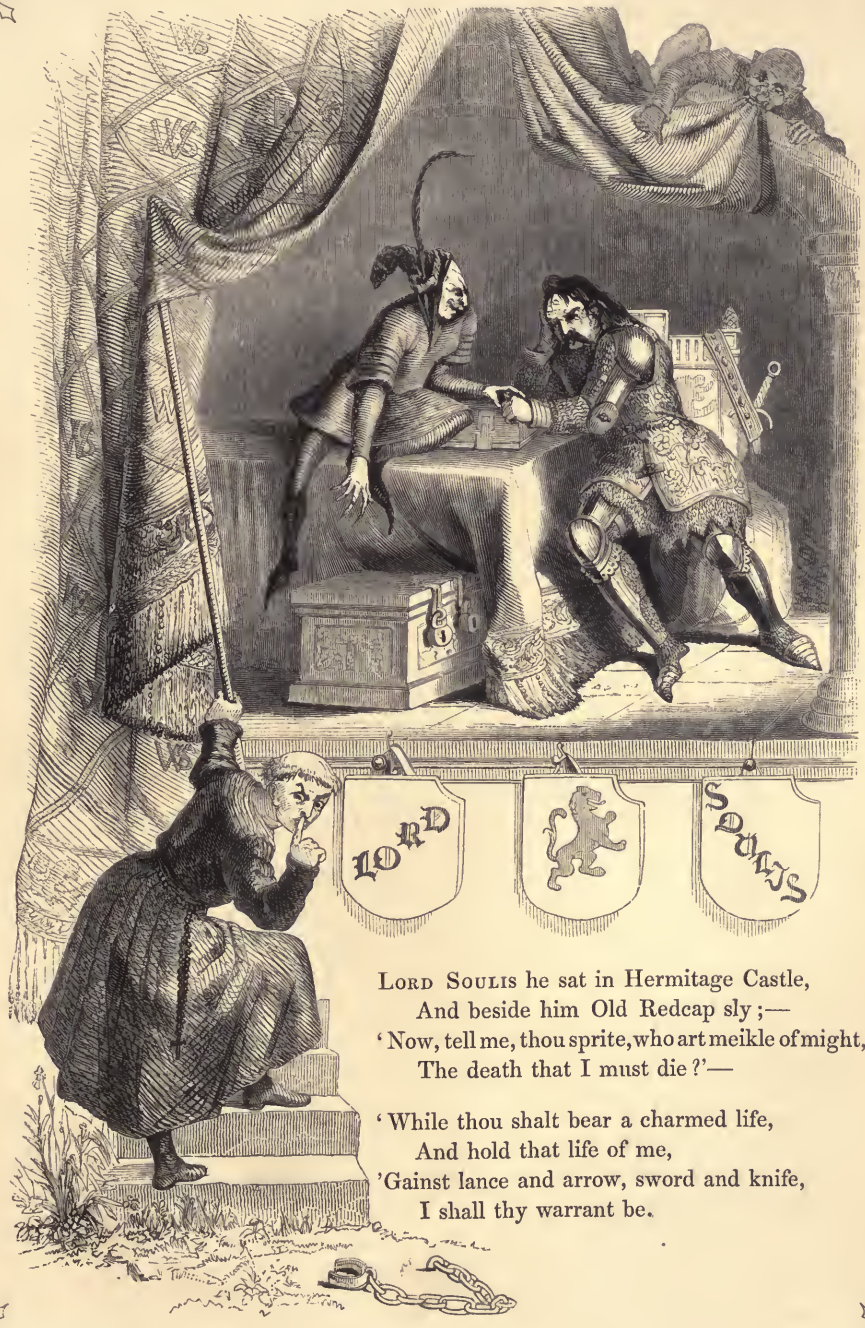
The ruins of the Castle of Hermitage still exist; and still, according to Stephen Oliver—"Rambles in Northumberland, and on the Scottish Border,"—the neighbouring peasantry whisper of the evil spirit believed to be confined there, and who, after locking the door of the dungeon, had thrown the key over his shoulder into the stream. The author also states that the cauldron, the muckle pot in which Soulis was reported to have been boiled, is an old kail-pot, of no very extraordinary size, which was purchased by some of the rebel army in 1715. The castle is now the property of the Duke of Buccleugh. It was, in 1546, the residence of the Earl of Bothwell; and here Queen Mary is said to have visited him, riding from Jedburg to Hermitage, and back again, in one day. The Earl was lying ill of a wound received from John Elliot of the Park, a desperate freebootor, whom he had attempted to apprehend.

Sir Walter Scott considers that the idea of Lord Soulis' familiar, was derived from the curious story of the "Spirit Orthone and the Lord of Corasse," which he prints in a note to the ballad, "in all its Gothic simplicity, as translated from Froissart, by the Lord of Berners." Orthone enters the service of the knight:—

"So this spyrite Orthone loved so the knyght, that oftentymes he would come and vysyte him, while he lay in his bedde aslepe, and outher pull him by the eare, or els stryke at his chambre dore or windowe. And whan the knyght awoke, than he would saye, 'Orthone lat me slepe.' 'Nay,' quod Orthone, 'that I will nat do, tyll I have shewed thee such tydinges as are fallen a-late.' The ladye, the knyghtes wyfe, wolde be sore afrayed, that her heer wald stand up, and hyde herself under the clothes. Than the knyght wolde saye, 'Why, what tidynges hast thou brought me?' Quod Orthone, 'I am come out of England, or out of Hungry, or some other place, and yesterday I came hens, and such things are fallen, or such other.'"

The connection between them was broken by the knight unwisely desiring to see the form of the spirit, with whose voice he had become familiar. Orthone appeared before him in the semblance of "a leane and yvell favoured sow." The knight set his hounds upon it, at which the spirit took offence, and never afterwards came to the "bedde syde" of the lord.

"The formation of ropes of sand, according to popular tradition, was a work of such difficulty, that it was assigned by Michael Scott to a number of spirits, for which it was necessary for him to find some interminable employment. Upon discovering the futility of their attempts to accomplish the work assigned, they petitioned their taskmaster to be allowed to mingle a few handfuls of barley-chaff with the sand. On his refusal, they were forced to leave untwisted the ropes which they had shaped. Such is the traditionary hypothesis of the vermicular ridges of the sand on the shore of the sea."



Lord Soulis he sat in Hermitage Castle,
And beside him Old Redcap sly;—
'Now, tell me, thou sprite, who art meikle of might,
The death that I must die?'—

'While thou shalt bear a charmed life,
And hold that life of me,
'Gainst lance and arrow, sword and knife,
I shall thy warrant be.

R. R. M'Ian, del. Linton, sc.



Nor forged steel, nor hempen band,
Shall e'er thy limbs confine,
Till threefold ropes of sifted sand
Around thy body twine.

If danger press fast, knock thrice on the chest,
With rusty padlocks bound;
Turn away your eyes, when the lid shall rise,
And listen to the sound.'

Lord Soulis he sat in Hermitage Castle,
And Redcap was not by;
And he called on a page, who was witty and sage,
To go to the barmkin high.

'And look thou east, and look thou west,
And quickly come tell to me,
What troopers haste along the waste,
And what may their livery be.'

He looked over fell, and he looked o'er flat,
But nothing, I wist, he saw,
Save a pyot on a turret that sat
Beside a corby craw.

The page he looked at the skrieh of day,
But, nothing, I wist, he saw,
Till a horseman gray, in the royal array,
Rode down the Hazel-shaw.

'Say, why do you cross o'er moor and moss?'
So loudly cried the page;
'I tidings bring, from Scotland's King,
To Soulis of Hermitage.

He bids me tell that bloody warden,
Oppressor of low and high,
If ever again his lieges complain,
The cruel Soulis shall die.'

R. R. M'Ian, del. Smith, sc.



By traitorous sleight they seized the knight,
Before he rode or ran,
And through the key-stone of the vault
They plunged him, both horse and man.

* * * * *

O May she came, and May she gaed,
By Goranberry green;
And May she was the fairest maid
That ever yet was seen.

O May she came, and May she gaed,
By Goranberry tower;
And who was it but cruel Lord Soulis
That carried her from her bower?

He brought her to his castle gray,
By Hermitage's side;
Says—'Be content, my lovely May,
For thou shalt be my bride.'

With her yellow hair, that glittered fair,
She dried the trickling tear;
She sighed the name of Branxholm's heir,
The youth that loved her dear.

'Now, be content, my bonny May,
And take it for your hame;
Or ever and aye shall ye rue the day
You heard Young Branxholm's name.

O'er Branxholm tower, ere the morning hour,
When the lift is like lead sae blue,
The smoke shall roll white on the weary night,
And the flame shall shine dimly through.'

Syne he's ca'd on him Ringan Red,
A sturdy kemp was he;
From friend, or foe, in Border feid,
Who never a foot would flee.



Red Ringan sped, and the spearmen led
Up Goranberry slack;
Ay, many a wight, unmatched in fight,
Who never more came back.

And bloody set the westering sun,
And bloody rose he up;
But little thought young Branxholm's heir
Where he that night should sup.

He shot the roebuck on the lee,
The dun deer on the law;
The glamour sure was in his ee
When Ringan nigh did draw.

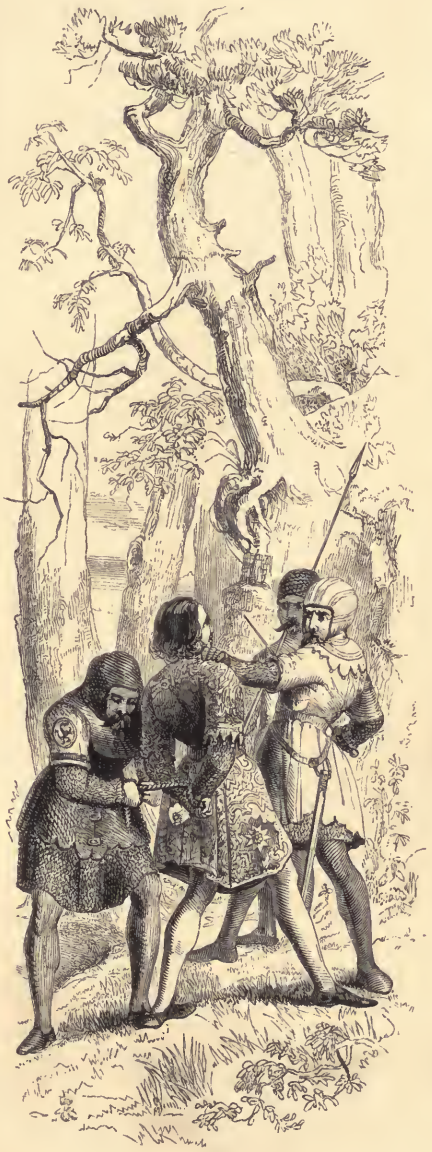
O'er heathy edge, through rustling sedge,
He sped till day was set;
And he thought it was his merry-men true,
When he the spearmen met.

Far from relief, they seized the chief;
His men were far away;
Through Hermitage slack they sent him back
To Soulis' castle gray;
Syne onward fure for Branxholm tower
Where all his merry-men lay.

'Now, welcome, noble Branxholm's heir!
Thrice welcome,' quoth Soulis, 'to me!
Say, dost thou repair to my castle fair,
My wedding guest to be?
And lovely May deserves, per fay,
A bride-man such as thee!'

And broad and bloody rose the sun,
And on the barmkin shone,
When the page was aware of Red Ringan there,
Who came riding all alone.

Lord Soulis.



To the gate of the tower Lord Soulis he speeds,
As he lighted at the wall,
Says—'Where did ye stable my stalwart steeds,
And where do they tarry all?'

'We stabled them sure, on the Tarras Muir;
We stabled them sure,' quoth he—
'Before we could cross the quaking moss
They all were lost but me.'

He clenched his fist, and he knocked on the chest,
And he heard a stifled groan;
And at the third knock each rusty lock
Did open one by one.

He turned away his eyes as the lid did rise,
And he listened silentlie;
And he heard breathed slow, in murmurs low,
'Beware of a coming tree!'

In muttering sound the rest was drowned,
No other word heard he;
But slow as it rose, the lid did close
With the rusty padlocks three.

* * * * *

Now rose with Branxholm's ae brother
The Teviot, high and low;
Bauld Walter by name, of meikle fame,
For none could bend his bow.

O'er glen and glade, to Soulis there sped
The fame of his array,
And that Teviotdale would soon assail
His towers and castle gray.

With clenchèd fist, he knocked on the chest,
And again he heard a groan;
And he raised his eyes as the lid did rise,
But answer heard he none.



The charm was broke, when the spirit spoke,
And it murmured sullenlie,—
'Shut fast the door, and for evermore
Commit to me the key.

Alas! that ever thou raisedst thine eyes,
Thine eyes to look on me!
Till seven years are o'er, return no more,
For here thou must not be.'

Think not but Soulis was wae to yield
His warlock chamber o'er;
He took the keys from the rusty lock,
That never were ta'en before.

He threw them o'er his left shoulder,
With meikle care and pain;
And he bade it keep them fathoms deep,
Till he returned again.

And still, when seven years are o'er,
Is heard the jarring sound;
When slowly opes the charmed door
Of the chamber under ground.

And some within the chamber door
Have cast a curious eye;
But none dare tell, for the spirits in hell,
The fearful sights they spy.

* * * * *

When Soulis thought on his merry-men now,
A woful wight was he;
Says—'Vengeance is mine, and I will not repine,
But Branxholm's heir shall die!'

Says—'What would you do, young Branxholm,
Gin ye had me, as I have thee?'—
'I would take you to the good greenwood
And gar your ain hand wale the tree.'



'Now shall thine ain hand wale the tree,
For all thy mirth and meikle pride;
And May shall choose, if my love she refuse,
A scrog bush thee beside.'

They carried him to the good greenwood
Where the green pines grew in a row;
And they heard the cry, from the branches high,
Of the hungry carrion crow.

They carried him on from tree to tree,
The spiry boughs below;
'Say, shall it be thine, on the tapering pine
To feed the hooded crow?'

'The fir-tops fall by Branxholm wall
When the night blast stirs the tree,
And it shall not be mine to die on the pine
I loved in infancie.'

Young Branxholm turned him and oft looked back,
And aye he passed from tree to tree;
Young Branxholm peep'd, and puirly spake,
'O sic a death is no for me!'

And next they passed the aspin gray,
Its leaves were rustling mournfullie;
'Now choose thee, choose thee, Branxholm gay!
Say, wilt thou never choose the tree?'—

'More dear to me is the aspin gray,
More dear than any other tree;
For, beneath the shade that its branches made,
Have pass'd the vows of my love and me.'

Young Branxholm peep'd, and puirly spake,
Until he did his ain men see,
With witches' hazel in each steel cap,
In scorn of Soulis' gramarye;
Then shoulder-height for glee he lap,—
'Methinks I spye a coming tree!'—

Lord Soulis.



'Ay, many may come, but few return:'
Quo' Soulis, the lord of gramarye;
'No warrior's hand in fair Scotland
Shall ever dint a wound on me!'—

'Now, by my sooth,' quo' bold Walter,
'If that be true we soon shall see.'—
His bent bow he drew, and his arrow was true,
But never a wound or scar had he.

Then up bespake him true Thomas,
He was the lord of Ersyltoun;
'The wizard's spell no steel can quell
Till once your lances bear him down.'—

They bore him down with lances bright,
But never a wound or scar had he;
With hempen bands they bound him tight,
Both hands and feet, on the Nine-stane lee.

That wizard accurst, the bands he burst:
They mouldered at his magic spell;
And neck and heel, in the forged steel,
They bound him against the charms of hell.

That wizard accurst, the bands he burst:
No forged steel his charms could bide;
Then up bespake him true Thomas,
'We 'll bind him yet, whate'er betide.'

The black spae-book from his breast he took,
Impressed with many a warlock spell;
And the book it was wrote by Michael Scott
Who held in awe the fiends of hell.

They buried it deep, where his bones they sleep,
That mortal man might never it see;
But Thomas did save it from the grave
When he returned from Faërie.

Lord Soulis.



The black spae-book from his breast he took,
And turned the leaves with curious hand;
No ropes, did he find, the wizard could bind
But threefold ropes of sifted sand.

They sifted the sand from the Nine-stane burn,
And shaped the ropes sae curiouslie;
But the ropes would neither twist nor twine
For Thomas true and his gramarye.

The black spae-book from his breast he took,
And again he turn'd it with his hand;
And he bade each lad of Teviot add
The barley chaff to the sifted sand.

The barley chaff to the sifted sand
They added still by handfuls nine:
But Redcap sly unseen was by,
And the ropes would neither twist nor twine.

And still beside the Nine-stane burn,
Ribbed like the sand at mark of sea,
The ropes that would not twist nor turn,
Shaped of the sifted sand you see.

The black spae-book true Thomas he took,
Again its magic leaves he spread;
And he found that to quell the powerful spell,
The wizard must be boiled in lead.*

* "The tradition concerning the death of Lord Soulis," writes Sir Walter Scott, "is not without a parallel in the real history of Scotland." Melville, of Glenbure, Sheriff of the Mearns, was detested by the barons of his country. Reiterated complaints of his conduct having been made to James I., the monarch answered, in a moment of unguarded impatience, "Sorrow gin the sheriff were sodden, and supped in broo!" The words were construed literally. The barons prepared a fire and a boiling cauldron into which they plunged the unlucky sheriff.

Lord Soulis.



On a circle of stones they placed the pot,
On a circle of stones but barely nine;
They heated it red and fiery hot,
Till the burnished brass did glimmer and shine.

They roll'd him up in a sheet of lead,
A sheet of lead for a funeral pall;
They plunged him in the cauldron red,
And melted him, lead, and bones, and all.

At the Skelf-hill, the cauldron still
The men of Liddesdale can show;
And on the spot, where they boil'd the pot,
The spreat and the deer-hair ne'er shall grow.



R. R. M'Ian del. Linton sc.

LORD THOMAS AND FAIR ANNET. This ballad was first printed in the "Reliques," where it is given "with some corrections from a MS. copy transmitted from Scotland." "It seems to be composed," says Dr. Percy, "not without improvements, out of two English ones, 'Lord Thomas and Fair Ellinor,' and 'Fair Margaret and Sweet William.'" The latter it does not very closely resemble; but between it and the former, there is certainly a general likeness; although, not sufficient to warrant the conclusion that the one was even suggested by the other. Lord Thomas and Fair Ellinor, is given "with corrections," from a black letter copy in the Pepys Library, entitled "A Tragical Story on the unfortunate love of Lord Thomas and Fair Ellinor, together with the downfal of the Brown Girl." "In the same collection," he adds, "may be seen an attempt to modernise this old story and reduce it to a different measure: a proof of its popularity." We print, from the original, the full title to this ballad:—

"The unfortunate Forrester, or Fair Ellinor's Tragedy, shewing how Lord Thomas, once a bold Forrester, fell in love with the Fair Lady Ellinor, but his mother would not suffer him to marry her, but told him of another, that was far richer. Then, the Lord Thomas, not willing to be undutiful to his mother, appoints his wedding day, and invites Fair Ellinor to come to his wedding; who, contrary to her mother's knowledge, came, and having seen his bride, she stabbed herself; which Lord Thomas seeing, took the same dagger, and killed himself.—The Tune is 'Chevy Chase.'"

From the black letter ballad we select a few stanzas, which the reader may compare with the Scottish composition:—

LORD THOMAS he was a bold forrestèr,
And a chaser of the king's deere;
Faire Ellinor was a fine womán,
And Lord Thomas he loved her deare.

'Come riddle my riddle, dear mother,' he sayd,
'And riddle us both as one;
Whether I shall marrye with faire Ellinòr,
And lett the browne girl alone?'

'The browne girl she has got houses and lands,
Faire Ellinor she has got none,
An therefore I charge thee on my blessing,
To bring me the browne girl home.'

And as it befelle on a high holidaye,
As many there are beside,
Lord Thomas he went to faire Ellinór
That should have been his bride.

And when he came to faire Ellinor's bower,
He knocked there at the ring,
And who was so ready as faire Ellinór,
To lett Lord Thomas withinn.

'What newes, what newes, Lord Thomas,' she sayd?
'What newes dost thou bring to mee?' —
'I 'm come to bid thee to my wedding,
And that is bad newes for thee.'

* * * * *

But when she came to Lord Thomas his gate,
She knocked there at the ring;
And who was so readye as Lord Thomàs,
To lett faire Ellinor in.

'Is this your bride,' faire Ellinor sayd?
'Methinks she looks wonderous browne;
Thou mightest have had as faire a womàn,
As ever trod on the grounde.'

* * * * *

This browne bride had a little penknife
That was both long and sharpe,
And betwixt the short ribs and the long,
She prick'd faire Ellinor's harte!

* * * * *

Lord Thomas he had a sword by his side,
As he walked about the halle;
He cut off his bride's head from her shouldèrs,
And threw it against the walle!

He set the hilte against the grounde,
And the point against his harte.—
There never three lovers together did meete,
That sooner againe did parte!

The other ballad to which reference is made by Dr. Percy, "Fair Margaret and Sweet William," we shall, hereafter, introduce into this collection. The ballad of "Lord Thomas and Fair Annet," is printed by Jamieson, but with considerable variations; also by Chambers, varied again; and by both under the title of "Sweet Willie and Fair Annie." Mr. Jamieson is of opinion that Percy's copy had been "adjusted, previous to its leaving Scotland, by some one who was more of a scholar than reciters generally are;" and considers, that in attempting to give it an antique cast, "it has been deprived of somewhat of that easy facility which is the distinguished characteristic of the traditionary ballad narrative." He accordingly prints a version, where, he contends, "no such experiment has been made;" and which he gives "pure and entire," as taken down by him from the recitation of a lady—Mrs. W. Arrott. This ballad is exceedingly simple and affecting; and contains some exquisite beauties of which that of Dr. Percy has been deprived, although, as a whole, less smooth and graceful. We select a few of the stanzas:—

* * * * *

Sweet Willie said a word in haste,
And Annie took it ill;
'I winna wed a tocherless maid
Against my parents' will.'

* * * * *

'There is twa maidens in a bower,
Which o' them sall I bring hame?
The nut-browne maid has sheep and cows,
And Fair Annie has nane.'

'It's an ye wed the nut-browne maid,
I'll heap gold wi' my hand;
But an ye wed her Fair Annie,
I'll straik it wi' a wand.'

* * * * *

And when she came to Mary's Kirk,
And sate down in the deas,
The light, that came fra Fair Annie,
Enlightened a' the place.

But up and stands the nut-browne-bride,
Just at her father's knee;
'O wha is this my father dear,
That blinks in Willie's e'e?'
'O this is Willie's first true love,
Before he loved thee.'

'O whare got ye that water, Annie,
That washes you sae white?'—
'I got it in my mither's wambe
Where ye'll ne'er get the like.

For ye've been wash'd in Dunny's well,
And dried on Dunny's dyke;
And a' the water in the sea
Will never wash ye white.'

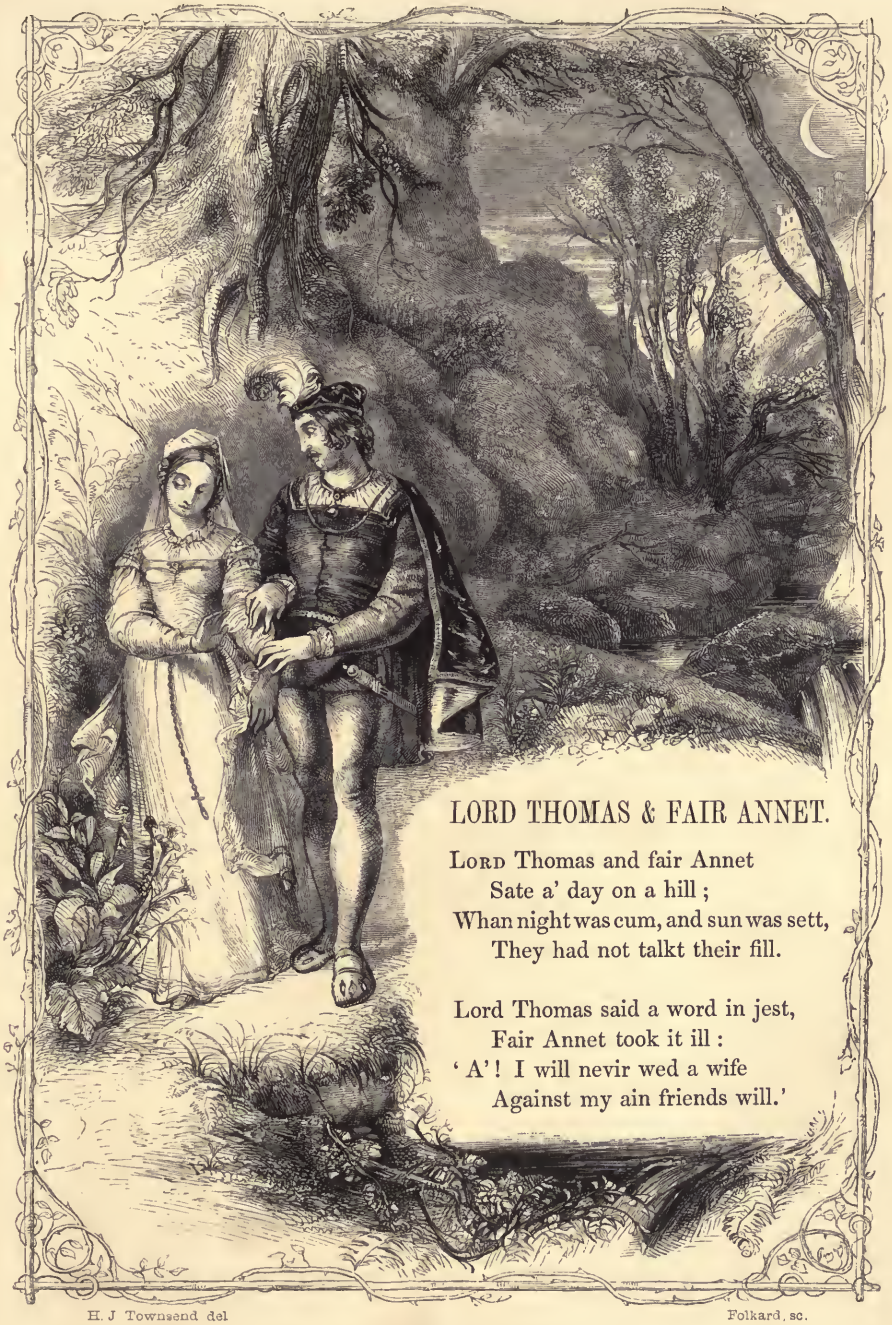
* * * * *

Willie's taen a rose o' his hat,
Laid it on Annie's lap,—
'The bonniest to the bonniest fa's,
Hae, wear it for my sake.'

'Take up and wear your rose, Willie,
As long as it will last;
For, like your love, its sweetness a'
Will soon be gone and past.'

* * * * *

The catastrophe does not resemble that which occurs in the ballad of "Lord Thomas and Fair Annet," but more nearly that which is recorded in the ballad of "Fair Margaret and Sweet William."



LORD THOMAS & FAIR ANNET.

Lord Thomas and fair Annet
Sate a' day on a hill;
Whan night was cum, and sun was sett,
They had not talkt their fill.

Lord Thomas said a word in jest,
Fair Annet took it ill:
'A'! I will nevir wed a wife
Against my ain friends will.'

H. J Townsend del

Folkard, sc.

Lord Thomas and Fair Annet.



'Gif ye wull nevir wed a wife,
A wife wull neir wed ye.'
Sae he is hame to tell his mithe
And knelt upon his knee:

'O rede, O rede, mither, he says,
A gude rede gie to me:
O sall I tak the nut-browne bride,
And let faire Annet be?'

'The nut-browne bride has gowd and gear,
Fair Annet she has gat nane;
And the little beauty fair Annet has,
O it wull soon be gane!'

And he has till his brother gane:
'Now, brother, rede ye me;
A' sall I marrie the nut-browne bride,
And let fair Annet be?'

'The nut-browne bride has oxen, brother,
The nut-browne bride has kye;
I wad hae ye marrie the nut-browne bride,
And cast fair Annet bye.'

'Her oxen may dye i' the house, Billie,
And her kye into the byre;
And I sall hae nothing to my sell,
Bot a fat fadge bye the fyre.'

And he has till his sister gane:
'Now, sister, rede ye me;
O sall I marrie the nut-browne bride,
And set fair Annet free?'

'Ise rede ye tak fair Annet, Thomas,
And let the browne bride alane;
Lest you should sigh, and say, Alace!
What is this we brought hame?'

H. J. Townsend, del. Folkard sc



'No, I will tak my mithers counsel,
And marrie me owt o' hand;
And I will tak the nut-browne bride:
Fair Annet may leive the land.'

Up then rose fair Annets father
Twa hours or it wer day,
And he is gane into the bower,
Wherein fair Annet lay.

'Rise up, rise up, fair Annet,' he says,
'Put on your silken sheene;
Let us gae to St. Maries kirke,
And see that rich weddeen.'—

'My maides gae to my dressing-roome,
And dress to me my hair;
Whair-eir ye laid a plait before,
See ye lay ten times mair.

My maids, gae to my dressing-room,
And dress to me my smock;
The one half is o' the holland fine,
The other o' needle-work.'

The horse fair Annet rade upon
He amblit like the wind,
Wi' siller he was shod before,
Wi' burning gowd behind.

Four and twantye siller bells
Wer a' tyed till his mane,
And yae tift o' the norland wind,
They tinkled ane by ane.

Four and twantye gay gude knichts
Rade by fair Annets side,
And four and twanty fair ladies,
As gin she had bin a bride.

Lord Thomas and Fair Annet.



And whan she cam to Maries kirk,
She sat on Maries stean:
The cleading that fair Annet had on
It skinkled in their een.

And whan she cam into the kirk,
She shimmerd like the sun;
The belt that was about her waist,
Was a' wi' pearles bedone.

She sat her by the nut-browne bride,
And her een they wer sae clear,
Lord Thomas he clean forgat the bride,
When fair Annet she drew near.

He had a rose into his hand,
And he gave it kisses three,
And reaching by the nut-browne bride,
Laid it on fair Annets knee.

Up than spak the nut-browne bride,
She spak wi' meikle spite;
'And whair gat ye that rose-water,
That does mak ye sae white?'

'O I did get the rose-water
Whair ye wull neir get nane,
For I did get that very rose-water
Into my mithers wame.'

The bride she drew a long bodkin,
Frae out her gay head-gear,
And strake fair Annet unto the heart,
That word she nevir spak mair.

Lord Thomas he saw fair Annet wex pale,
And marvelit what mote be:
But whan he saw her dear hearts blude,
A' wode-wroth wexed he.

H. J. Townsend, del. Branston, sc.

Lord Thomas and Fair Annet.



He drew his dagger that was sae sharp,
That was sae sharp and meet,
And drave into the nut-browne bride,
That fell deid at his feit.

'Now stay for me, dear Annet,' he sed,
'Now stay, my dear!' he cryd,—
Then strake the dagger untill his heart,
And fell deid by her side.*

Lord Thomas was buried without kirk-wa;
Fair Annet within the quiere;
And o' the tane thair grew a birk,
The other a bonne briere.

* In Jamieson's ballad of "Sweet Willie and Fair Annie," the spirit of the lady, who dies of a broken heart, is made to visit the bridal bed of her betrayer:—

When night was come, and day was gone,
And a' men boun to bed,
Sweet Willie and the nut-browne bride
In their chambér were laid.

They werena weel lyen down,
And scarcely fa'n asleep,
Whan up and stands she, Fair Annie,
Just up at Willie's feet.

'Weel brook ye o' your brown brown bride,
Between ye and the wa';
And sae will I o' my winding sheet,
That suits me best ava'.

Weel brook ye o' your brown brown bride,
Between ye and the stock;
And sae will I o' my black black kist,
That has neither key nor lock.

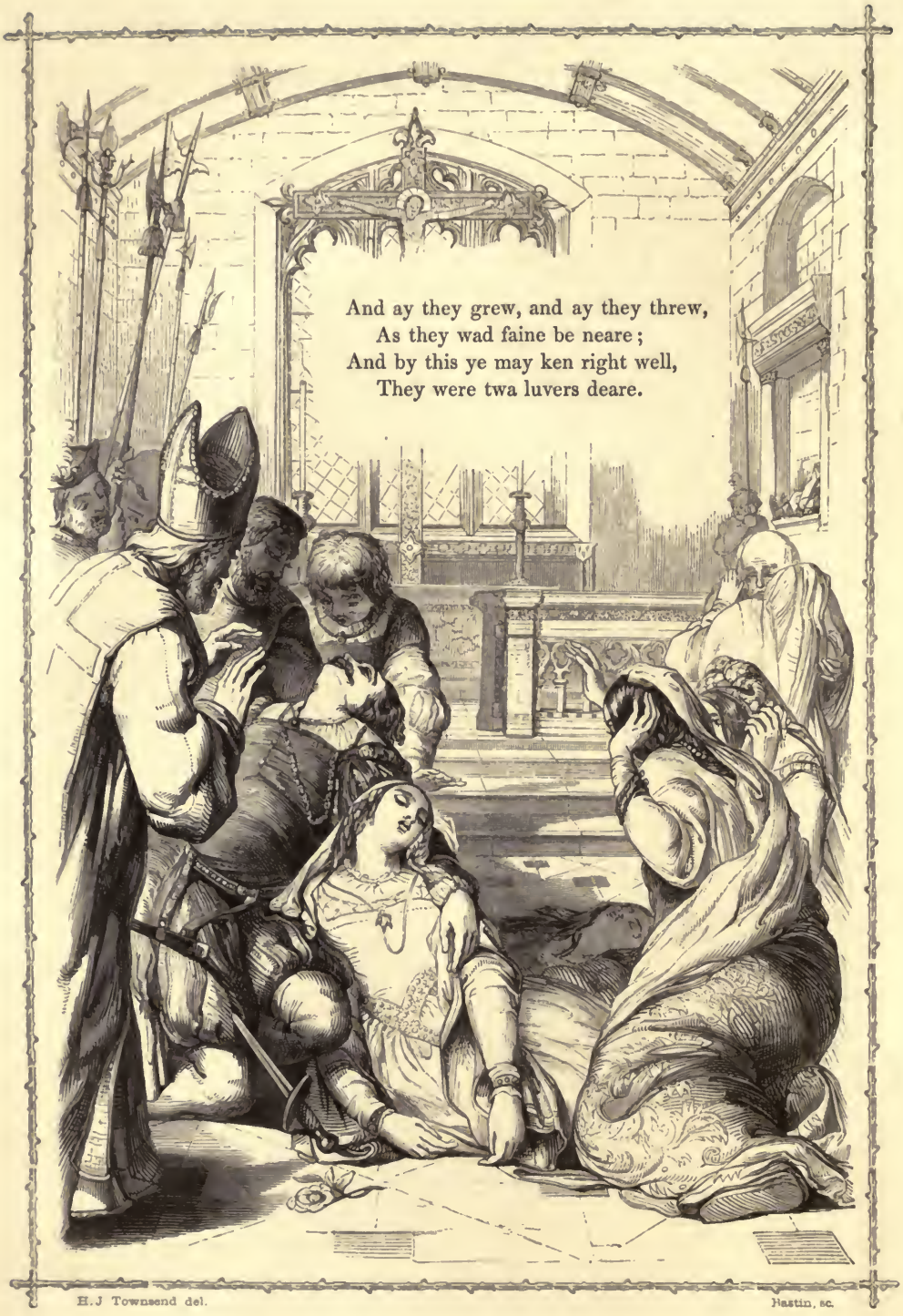
Weel brook ye o' your brown brown bride,
And o' your bridal bed;
And sae will I o' the cald cald mools,
That soon will hap my head.'

Sae Willie raise, put on his claes,
Drew till him his hose and shoon,
And he is on to Annie's bower,
By the lei light o' the moon.

* * * *

The lasten bower that he came till,
O heavy was his care!
The waxen lights were burning bright,
And Fair Annie streeket there.

H. J. Townsend, del. Walmsley, sc



H.J Townsend del. Hastin, sc.

AUSE FOODRAGE. This ballad was originally published in the "Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border," where it is stated to have been "chiefly given" from the MS. of Mrs. Brown, of Falkland.* Although there can be no question that it received many improvements in passing through the hands of the accomplished editor, there can be as little doubt of its antiquity in some ruder state; for Sir Walter Scott and Mr. Motherwell both affirm that it has been "popular in many parts of Scotland;" and by the former it is asserted, that he had made "strict enquiry into the authenticity of the song," in consequence of a line, in verse 31, strongly resembling one that occurs in the avowedly modern ballad of "Hardyknute,"—

Norse e'en like gray goss-hawk stared wild.

His doubts were removed by the evidence of a lady of rank (Lady Douglas, of Douglas, sister to the Duke of Buccleuch), who not only recollected the ballad as having amused her infancy, but could repeat many of the verses.

* "An ingenious lady," writes Sir Walter Scott, "to whose taste and memory the world is indebted." She was the youngest daughter of Mr. Thomas Gordon, professor of philosophy, in King's College, Aberdeen; and the circumstances, under which she obtained so much proficiency in ballad lore, are thus explained in a letter from her father to Alexander Fraser Tytler, Esq.:—"An aunt of my children, Mrs. Farquhar, now dead, who was married to the proprietor of a small estate, near the sources of the Dee, in Braemar, a good old woman, who had spent the best part of her life among flocks and herds, resided, in her later days, in the town of Aberdeen. She was possessed of a most tenacious memory, which retained all the songs she had heard from nurses and countrywomen in that sequestered part of the country. Being naturally fond of my children, when young, she had them much about her, and delighted them with the songs and tales of chivalry. My youngest daughter, Mrs. Brown, of Falkland, is blessed with as good a memory as her aunt, and has almost the whole of her songs by heart." They were subsequently written down by her nephew, Professor Scott, "as his aunt sung them." To this MS., reference is frequently made by the editor of the "Border Minstrelsy,"—"as containing a curious and valuable collection," from which he procured "very material assistance," and which often furnished him with "various readings, and supplementary stanzas," to such as were known on the borders. Jamieson, also, thus acknowledges his obligations to this lady:—"For the groundwork of this collection, and for the greater and more valuable part of the popular and romantic tales which it contains, the public are indebted to Mrs. Brown, of Falkland. Besides the large supply of ballads, taken down from her own recitation many years ago, by Professor Scott, of Aberdeen,—in 1800, I paid an unexpected visit to Mrs. Brown, at Dysart, where she then happened to be for health, and wrote down, from her unpremeditated repetition, about a dozen pieces more, most of which will be found in my work. Several others, which I had not time to take down, were afterwards transmitted to me by Mrs. Brown herself, and by her late highly-respectable and worthy husband, the Reverend Dr. Brown. Every person, who peruses the following sheets, will see how much I owe to Mrs. Brown, and to her nephew, my much-esteemed friend, Professor Scott; and it rests with me to feel, that I owe them much more for the zeal and spirit which they have manifested, than even for the valuable communications which they have made. As to the 'authenticity' of the pieces themselves, they are as authentic as traditionary poetry can be expected to be; and their being more entire than most other such pieces are found to be, may be easily accounted for, from the circumstance, that there are few persons of Mrs. Brown's abilities and education, who repeat popular ballads from memory. She learnt most of them before she was twelve years old, from old women and maid-servants. What she once learnt she never forgot; and such were her curiosity and industry, that she was not contented with merely knowing the story, according to one way of telling, but studied to acquire all the varieties of the same tale which she could meet with."

For the leading incident of the poem, and the beautiful episode introduced into it—the exchange of the children, upon which the story is made to depend—there appears to be no historical authority. At least, Sir Walter Scott has referred to none; and if there had been any, it would not have escaped his search. Yet it is not improbable that some such circumstance did actually occur; the old ballad-makers were seldom mere inventors; and the tragedy, with all its attendant events, may be considered as by no means rare or uncommon to a remote age. That its age is "remote" is rendered certain, by the references to King Easter and King Wester; who, it is surmised by Sir Walter Scott, were "petty princes of Northumberland and Westmoreland. From this," he adds, "it may be conjectured, with some degree of plausibility, that the independent kingdoms of the east and west coast were, at an early period, thus denominated, according to the Saxon mode of naming districts from their relative positions, as Essex, Wessex, Sussex." In the "complaynt of Scotland," mention is made of an ancient romance, entitled, "How the King of Estmureland married the King's daughter of Westmureland." But Mr. Ritson is of opinion, that—"Estmureland and Westmureland have no sort of relation to Northumberland and Westmoreland. The former was never called Eastmoreland, nor were there any kings of Westmoreland, unless we admit the authority of an old rhyme, cited by Usher:—

Here the King Westmer
Slew the King Rothinger.

In the old metrical romance of 'Kyng Horn,' or 'Horn Child,' we find both Westnesse and Estnesse; and it is somewhat singular, that two places, so called, actually exist in Yorkshire at this day. But 'ness,' in that quarter, is the name given to an inlet from a river. There is, however, great confusion in this poem, as 'Horn' is called king, sometimes of one country, and sometimes of the other. In the French original, Westir is said to have been the old name of Hirland or Ireland; which, occasionally at least, is called Westnesse, in the translation, in which Britain is named Sudene; but here, again, it is inconsistent and confused. It is, at any rate," adds the learned antiquary, "highly probable, that the story, cited in the 'Complaynt of Scotland,' was a romance of 'King Horn,' whether prose or verse; and, consequently, that Estmureland and Westmureland should there mean England and Ireland; though it is possible that no other instance can be found of these two names occurring with the same sense."

Of the Scottish origin of this ballad there is internal evidence; and several of the phrases made use of, besides the titles to which we have referred, afford corroborative proof of its antiquity. The term "kevil," used in the third verse,—

And they cast kevils them amang,
And kevils them between;
And they cast kevils them amang,
Wha suld gae kill the king.—

is thus explained by Sir Walter Scott,—"'Kevils'—lots. Both words originally meant only a portion or share of any thing.—*Leges Burgorum*, cap 59, *de lot, cut*, or *kavil*. *Statua Gildæ*, cap 20. *Nullus emat lanam, &c., nisi fuerit confrater Gildæ, &c. Neque* lot *neque* cavil *habeat cum aliquo contratre nostro*. In both these laws, 'lot' and 'cavil' signify a share in trade."





FAUSE FOODRAGE.

King Easter has courted her for her lands,
 King Wester for her fee,
King Honour for her comelye face,
 And for her fair bodie.

They had not been four months married,
 As I have heard them tell,
Until the nobles of the land
 Against them did rebel.

And they cast kevils them amang,
 And kevils them between ;
And they cast kevils them amang,
 Wha suld gae kill the king.

T. M. Joy, del.

Mary Ann Williams, sc.



O some said yea, and some said nay,
Their words did not agree;
Till up and got him, Fause Foodrage,
And swore it suld be he.

When bells were rung, and mass was sung,
And a' men bound to bed,
King Honour and his gay ladye
In a hie chamber were laid.

Then up and raise him, Fause Foodrage,
When a' were fast asleep,
And slew the porter in his lodge,
That wateh and ward did keep.

O, four and twenty silver keys
Hung hie upon a pin;
And aye, as ae door he did unloek,
He has fastened it him behind.

Then up and raise him, King Honour,
Says—'What means a' this din?
Or what 's the matter, Fause Foodrage,
Or wha has loot you in?'—

'O ye my errand weel sall learn,
Before that I depart.'—
Then drew a knife, baith lang and sharp,
And pierced him to the heart.

Then up and got the queen hersell,
And fell low down on her knee:
'O spare my life, now, Fause Foodrage!
For I never injured thee.

O spare my life, now, Fause Foodrage!
Until I lighter be!
And see gin it be lad or lass,
King Honour has left wi' me.'—



'O gin it be a lass,' he says,
'Weel nursed it sall be;
But gin it be a lad bairn,
He sall be hangéd hie.

I winna spare for his tender age,
Nor yet for his hie hie kin;
But soon as e'er he born is,
He sall mount the gallows pin.'—

O four-and-twenty valiant knights
Were set the queen to guard;
And four stood aye at her bouir door,
To keep both watch and ward.

But when the time drew near an end,
That she suld lighter be,
She cast about to find a wile,
To set her body free.

O she has birled these merry young men
With the ale but and the wine,
Until they were a' deadly drunk
As any wild-wood swine.

'O narrow, narrow, is this window,
And big, big, am I grown!'—
Yet through the might of our Ladye,
Out at it she has gone.

She wandered up, she wandered down,
She wandered out and in;
And, at last, into the very swine's stythe,
The queen brought forth a son.

Then they cast kevils them amang,
Which suld gae seek the queen;
And the kevil fell upon Wise William,
And he sent his wife for him.



O when she saw Wise William's wife,
The queen fell on her knee:
'Win up, win up, madam!' she says:
'What needs this courtesie?'—

'O out o' this I winna rise,
Till a boon ye grant to me;
To change your lass for this lad bairn,
King Honour left me wi'.

And ye maun learn my gay goss-hawk
Right weel to breast a steed;
And I sall learn your turtle dow
As weel to write and read.

And ye maun learn my gay goss-hawk
To wield baith bow and brand;
And I sall learn your turtle dow
To lay gowd wi' her hand.

At kirk and market when we meet,
We 'll dare make nae avowe,
But—Dame, how does my gay goss-hawk?
—Madame, how does my dow?'*

* "This metaphorical language," says Scott, "was customary among the northern nations. In 925, King Adelstein sent an embassy to Harald Harfager, King of Norway, the chief of which presented that prince with a sword. As it was presented by the point, the Norwegian chief, in receiving it, unwarily laid hold of the hilt. The English ambassador declared, in the name of his master, that he accepted the act as a deed of homage. The Norwegian prince resolving to circumvent his rival by a similar artifice, sent, next summer, an embassy to Adelstein, the chief of which presented Haco, the son of Harald, to the English prince; and, placing him on his knees, made the following declaration:—"*Haraldus, Normanorum Rex, amice te salutat;* albamque *hanc* avem *bene institutam mittit, utque melius deinceps erudias, postulat.*" The king received young Haco on his knees, which the Norwegian accepted, in the name of his master, as a declaration of inferiority; according to the proverb, "*Is minor semper habetur, qui alterius filium educat.*"



When days were gane, and years came on,
Wise William he thought lang;
And he has ta'en King Honour's son
A-hunting for to gang.

It sae fell out, at this hunting,
Upon a simmer's day,
That they came by a fair castell,
Stood on a sunny brae.

'O dinna ye see that bonny castell,
Wi' halls and towers sae fair?
Gin ilka man had back his ain,
Of it you suld be heir.'—

'How I suld be heir of that castell,
In sooth, I canna see;
For it belangs to Fause Foodrage,
And he is na kin to me.'—

'O gin ye suld kill him, Fause Foodrage,
You would do but what was right;
For, I wot, he killed your father dear,
Or ever ye saw the light.

And gin ye suld kill him, Fause Foodrage,
There is no man durst you blame;
For he keeps your mother a prisoner,
And she daurna take ye hame.'—

The boy stared wild like a grey goss-hawk,
Says,—'What may a' this mean?'
'My boy, ye are King Honour's son,
And your mother's our lawful queen.'

'O gin I be King Honour's son,
By our Ladye I swear,
This night I will that traitor slay,
And relieve my mother dear!'—

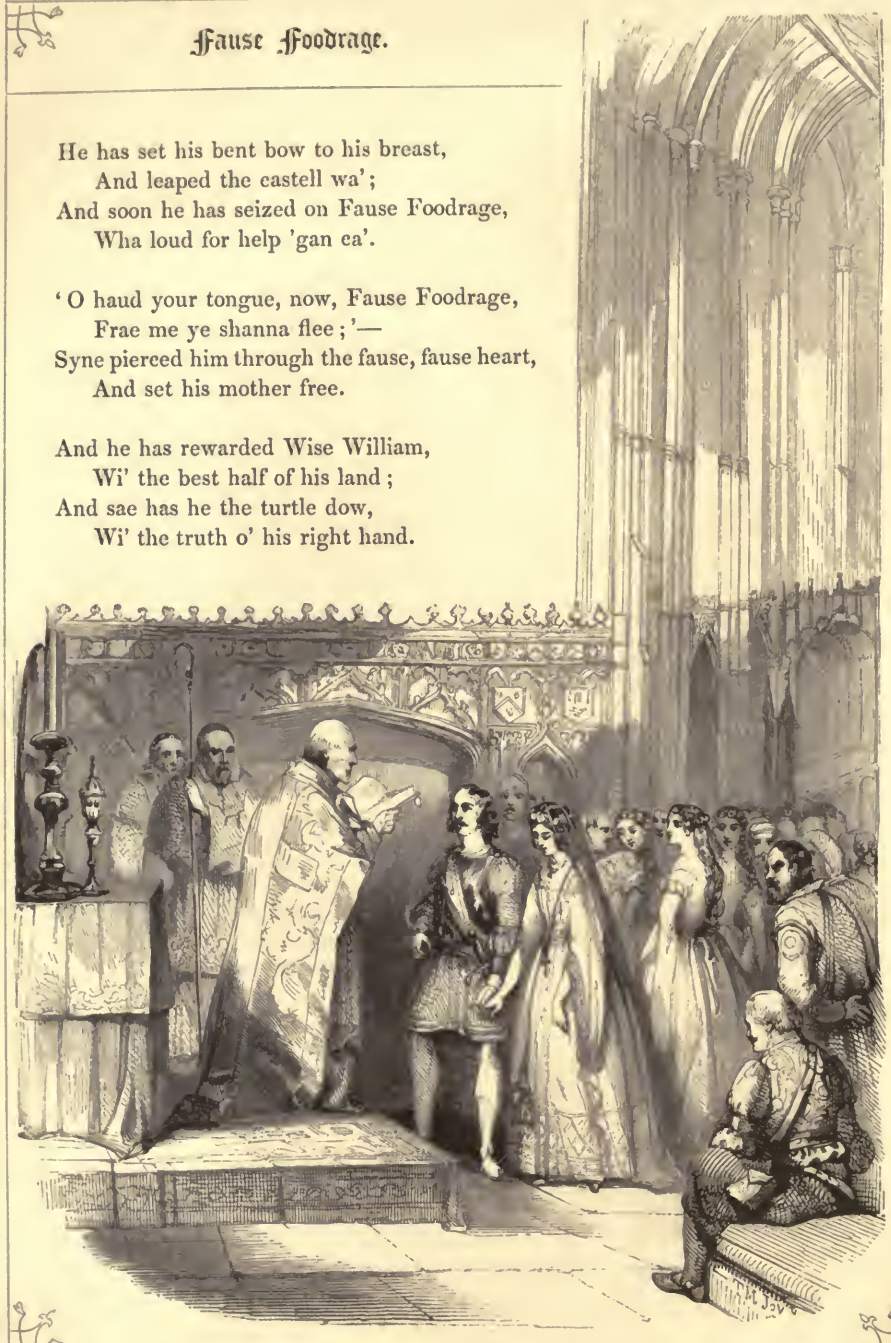
T. M. Joy, del. Mary Ann Williams, sc

Fause Foodrage.

He has set his bent bow to his breast,
And leaped the castell wa';
And soon he has seized on Fause Foodrage,
Wha loud for help 'gan ca'.

'O haud your tongue, now, Fause Foodrage,
Frae me ye shanna flee;'—
Syne pierced him through the fause, fause heart,
And set his mother free.

And he has rewarded Wise William,
Wi' the best half of his land;
And sae has he the turtle dow,
Wi' the truth o' his right hand.



T. M. Joy, del. Mary Ann Williams sc.

GENEVIEVE. This exquisitely beautiful ballad is the composition of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, whose rank is high among the veritable poets of our age and country, and whose poems will endure as long as the language in which they are written. It was composed at an early period of his life; and seems to be a record of some actual memory,—one of those ordinary events which stir the heart and excite the imagination, and transmute common materials into pure gold. The leading sentiment is akin to that expressed in some lines equally touching, entitled, "Recollections of Love:"—

How warm this woodland wild recess,
Love surely hath been breathing here;
And this sweet bed of heath, my dear,
Swells up, then sinks with fain caress,
As if to have you yet more near!

Eight springs have flown since last I lay
On sea-ward Quantock's heathy hills,
Where quiet sounds from hidden rills
Float here and there, like things astray,
And high o'er-head the sky-lark shrills.

No voice as yet had made the air
Be music with your name; yet why
That asking look, that yearning sigh,
That sense of promise everywhere?
Beloved! flew your spirit by?

As when a mother doth explore
The rose-mark on her long-lost child,
I met, I loved you, maiden mild!
As whom I long had loved before,—
So deeply had I been beguiled!

You stood before me like a thought,
A dream remembered in a dream;
But when those meek eyes first did seem
To tell me Love within you wrought,—
O, Greta, dear domestic stream!—

Has not, since then, Love's prompture deep,—
Has not Love's whisper evermore
Been ceaseless, as thy gentle roar?
Sole voice, when other voices sleep,
Dear under-song in Clamour's hour!

As there is no "history" attached to this poem, we may occupy our space with some brief memorials concerning the life and writings of the distinguished poet. Samuel Taylor Coleridge was born on the 20th of October, 1772, at Ottery St. Mary, in Devonshire. His father was a learned clergyman; and the poet was the youngest of eleven children. In 1782, he was admitted into Christ's Hospital, London, where, according to his own account, he "enjoyed the inestimable advantage of a very sensible, though, at the same time, a very severe master." At a premature age, even before his fifteenth year, he had "bewildered himself in metaphysical and theological controversy;" yet he pursued his studies with so much zeal and perseverance, that, in 1791, he became Grecian, or captain of the school, which entitled him to an exhibition at the University: he was entered at Jesus College, Cambridge. Three years afterwards, "in an inauspicious hour, he left the friendly cloisters," without assigning any cause, and without taking his degree; and again came to London. There, without the means of support, he wandered for some days about the streets, and enlisted in the 15th Dragoons. While doing duty at Reading, he wrote, on the wall of the stable, a Latin sentence,—

Eheu! quam infortunii miserrimum est fuisse felicem

It chanced to meet the eye of one of the officers. The enquiry that followed led to his discharge. In 1794, he published a small volume of poems. Subsequently, the taint of French republicanism fell upon him; and he lectured at Bristol in praise of the dæmon that had stolen in, and was for a time welcomed, in the garb of liberty. In

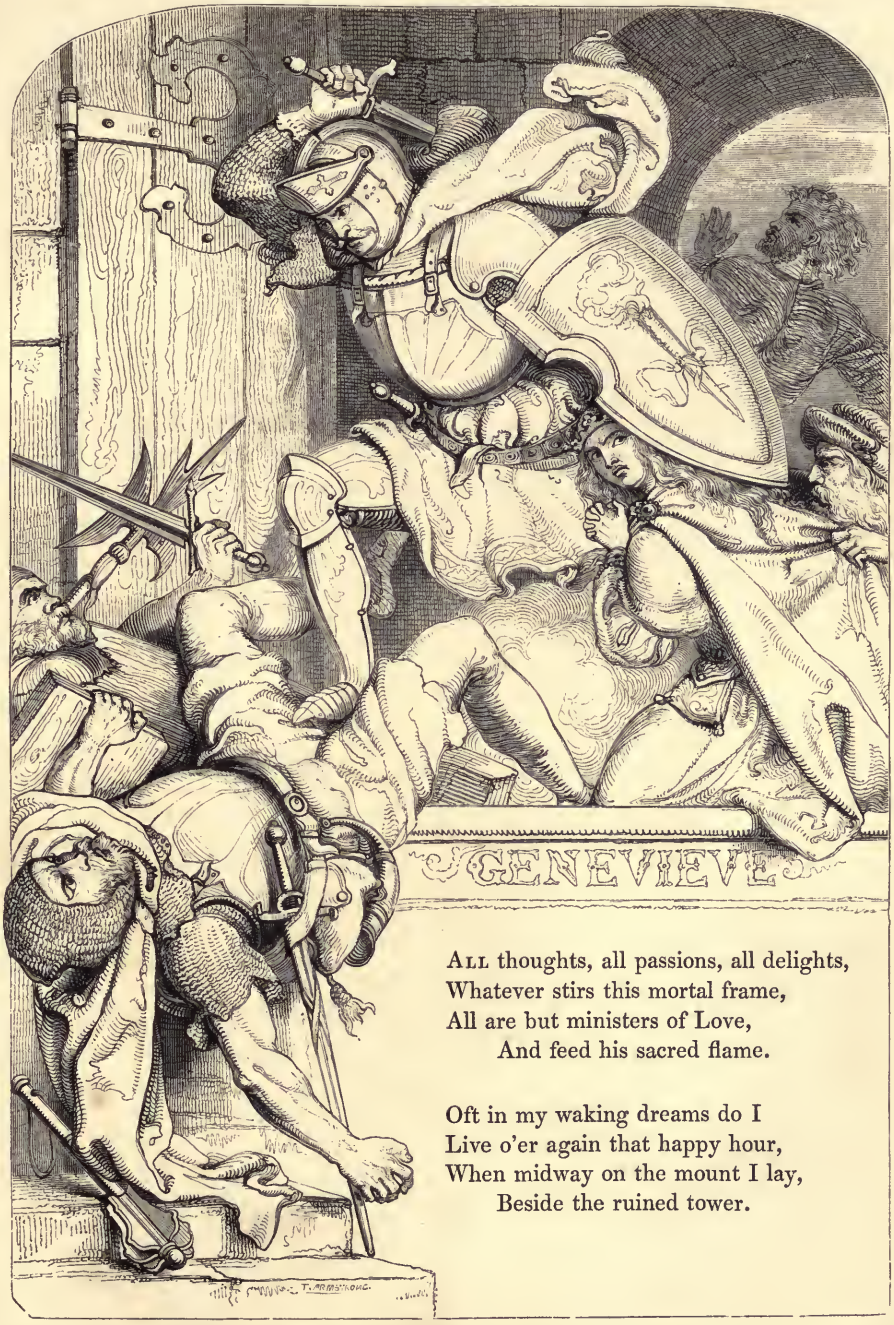
1795, he married; and in 1798, he visited Germany. In 1800, he returned to England; and although he had formerly professed Unitarianism, and had preached to a congregation at Taunton, he became a firm adherent to the doctrines of Christianity; or, to use his own expression, found a "reconversion." Afterwards, he "wasted the prime and manhood of his intellect" as the editor of a newspaper. During the last nineteen years of his life he resided with his faithful and devoted friends, Mr. and Mrs. Gillman, at Highgate,—lecturing occasionally, writing poetry and prose, and delighting and instructing all who had the good fortune to be admitted to his society. He died on the 25th of July, 1834.

The friends who knew him best, and under the shelter of whose roof-tree the later and the happier years of his chequered life were passed, have recorded their opinion of his character on the tablet that marks his grave in the church at Highgate; and all who enjoyed the privilege of his acquaintance will bear testimony to its truth. It tells of his profound learning and discursive genius; his private worth; his social and christian virtues: and adds, that his disposition was unalterably sweet and angelic; that he was an ever-enduring, ever-loving friend; the gentlest and kindest teacher; the most engaging home-companion:—

> Philosopher contemning wealth and death,
> Yet docile, child-like, full of life and love.

Hazlitt, who knew him in his youth, describes him as rather above the middle size, inclined to corpulency; as having a dreamy countenance, a forehead broad and high, with large projecting eye-brows, and "eyes rolling like a sea with darkened lustre." The description applies with almost equal accuracy to the poet in age. The wonderful eloquence of his conversation is a prominent theme with all who have written or spoken of him: it was full of matter. His bookish lore, and his wide and intimate acquaintance with men and things were enlivened by a grace and sprightliness absolutely startling: his manner was singularly attractive, and the tones of his voice were perfect music. During the later years of his life, it was our own privilege occasionally to enjoy his society; and the beneficial and gratifying hours so passed, are among the most pleasant and profitable of our memories.

Few have obtained greater celebrity in the world of letters; yet few have so wasted the energies of a naturally great mind; few, in short, have done so *little* of the purposed and promised *much*. Some of the most perfect examples that our language can supply are to be found among his poetry, full of the simplest and purest nature, yet pregnant with the deepest and most subtle philosophy. His judgment and taste were sound and refined to a degree; and when he spoke of the "little he had published," as being of "little importance," it was because his conception of excellence exceeded his power to convey it. Those who read his wildest productions—"Christabel," and the "Ancient Mariner"—will readily appreciate the fertile imagination, and the prodigious strength of the writer; and if they turn to the gentler efforts of his genius, they will find many illustrations of a passage which prefaces an edition of his "Juvenile Verses:"—"Poetry has been to me its 'exceeding great reward;' it has soothed my afflictions, it has multiplied and refined my enjoyments; it has endeared solitude; and it has given me the habit of wishing to discover the good and the beautiful in all that meets and surrounds me."



All thoughts, all passions, all delights,
Whatever stirs this mortal frame,
All are but ministers of Love,
And feed his sacred flame.

Oft in my waking dreams do I
Live o'er again that happy hour,
When midway on the mount I lay,
Beside the ruined tower.

Franklin, del. Armstrong, sc.



The moonshine, stealing o'er the scene,
Had blended with the lights of eve;
And she was there, my hope, my joy,
My own dear Genevieve!

She leaned against the armed man,
The statue of the armed knight;
She stood and listened to my lay,
Amid the lingering light.

Few sorrows hath she of her own,
My hope! my joy! my Genevieve!
She loves me best whene'er I sing
The songs that make her grieve.

I played a soft and doleful air,
I sang an old and moving story—
An old rude song, that suited well
That ruin wild and hoary.

She listened with a flitting blush,
With downcast eyes and modest grace;
For well she knew, I could not choose,
But gaze upon her face.

I told her of the knight that wore
Upon his shield a burning brand;
And that for ten long years he wooed
The Lady of the Land.

I told her how he pined: and ah!
The deep, the low, the pleading tone
With which I sang another's love,
Interpreted my own.

She listened with a flitting blush,
With downcast eyes, and modest grace;
And she forgave me, that I gazed
Too fondly on her face!



But when I told the cruel scorn
That crazed that bold and lovely knight,
And that he crossed the mountain-woods,
Nor rested day nor night;

That sometimes from the savage den,
And sometimes from the darksome shade,
And sometimes starting up at once
In green and sunny glade,—

There came and looked him in the face
An angel beautiful and bright;
And that he knew it was a fiend;
This miserable knight!

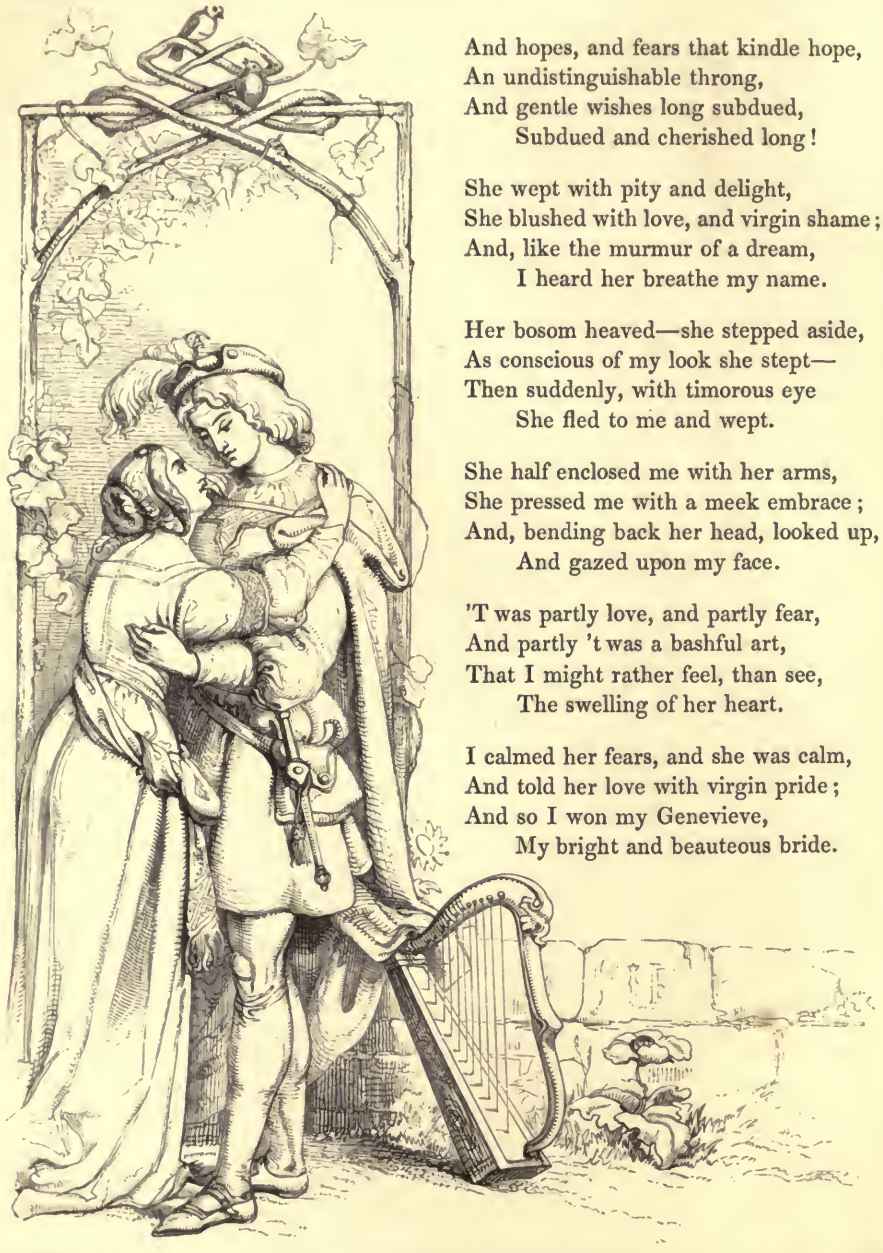
And that, unknowing what he did,
He leaped amid a murderous band,
And saved from outrage worse than death
The Lady of the Land;—

And how she wept, and clasped his knees;
And how she tended him in vain—
And ever strove to expiate
The scorn that crazed his brain;—

And that she nursed him in a cave;
And how his madness went away,
When on the yellow forest-leaves
A dying man he lay;—

His dying words—but when I reached
That tenderest strain of all the ditty,
My faltering voice and pausing harp
Disturbed her soul with pity!

All impulses of soul and sense
Had thrilled my guileless Genevieve;
The music and the doleful tale,
The rich and balmy eve;



And hopes, and fears that kindle hope,
An undistinguishable throng,
And gentle wishes long subdued,
Subdued and cherished long!

She wept with pity and delight,
She blushed with love, and virgin shame;
And, like the murmur of a dream,
I heard her breathe my name.

Her bosom heaved—she stepped aside,
As conscious of my look she stept—
Then suddenly, with timorous eye
She fled to me and wept.

She half enclosed me with her arms,
She pressed me with a meek embrace;
And, bending back her head, looked up,
And gazed upon my face.

'T was partly love, and partly fear,
And partly 't was a bashful art,
That I might rather feel, than see,
The swelling of her heart.

I calmed her fears, and she was calm,
And told her love with virgin pride;
And so I won my Genevieve,
My bright and beauteous bride.

FAIR MARGARET AND SWEET WILLIAM. This fine and pathetic old ballad we borrow from Dr. Percy, who gives it "from a modern printed copy, picked up on a stall;" and although its age is unquestionable, it does not appear that an earlier edition of it has yet been recovered. Its date is, perhaps, very remote; for although the language has been modernised, it retains many tokens of antiquity; and passages of it were quoted by Fletcher, in his play of "The Knight of the Burning Pestle." The full title of the ballad "picked up" by Dr. Percy, is "Fair Margaret's Misfortunes; or Sweet William's Frightful Dreams on his Wedding Night, with the Sudden Death and Burial of those Noble Lovers." In extracting it, we have omitted the two concluding stanzas; they are, evidently, additions of some "other hand," and, by their meanness, essentially weaken the touching picture by which the story is terminated. It may be well, however, to introduce them here, where they will less prejudice the beautiful and pathetic composition. The lines are designed to "draw out" the fine and natural idea of the rose and brier growing out of the graves of the hapless lovers:—

They grew as high as the church top,
Till they could grow no higher;
And there they grew in a true lover's knot,
Made all the folke admire.

Then came the clerk of the parish,
As you this truth shall hear,
And by misfortune cut them down,
Or they had now been there.

Many of the old ballad-makers have introduced a similar incident;—the rose and brier springing from the earth that covered the graves of youths and maidens, whose loves were "pleasant," and who "in death were not divided." Thus, in "Lord Thomas and Fair Annet:"—

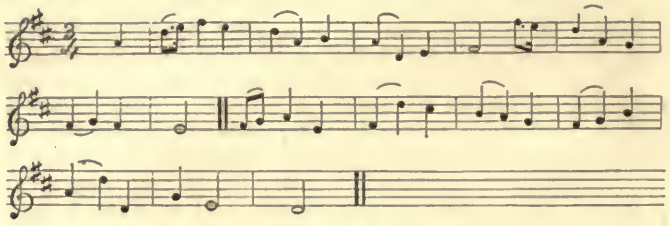
And ay they grew, and ay they threw,
As they wad faine be neare.

And in the Douglas Tragedy, after the "twa" had "met," and the "twa" had "plat:"—

By and rade the black Douglas,
And wow but he was rough!
For he pulled up the bonny brier,
And flanged it in St. Maries lough.

To the passage quoted by Fletcher, we are indebted for the ballad of "William and Margaret," written by David Mallet; which Dr. Percy distinguishes as "one of the most beautiful ballads to be found in our own or any language." Mallet had never seen the poem which Dr. Percy recovered; he expresses his belief that it was "not any where to be met with;" and adds, that "the few lines, naked of ornament and simple as they are, struck his fancy;" and "bringing fresh into his

mind an unhappy adventure, much talked of formerly, gave birth to the composition." The air to this ballad of Mallett's we introduce:—



The ballad of "Fair Margaret and Sweet William," it is probable, originated also another poem of touching interest and high merit. It is entitled "Sweet William's Ghost," and was, we believe, first published by Allan Ramsay in the "Tea Table Miscellany." In this, the spirit of the dead lover appears to the maiden, demanding back his "faith and troth," and replying to the question of her whose heart was true:—

'There's no room at my head, Marg'ret,
There's no room at my feet;
There's no room at my side, Marg'ret,
My coffin's made so meet.'*

In Jamieson's version of "Sweet William and Fair Annie," the concluding incidents of the ballad are also preserved.

We question, however, if either the poem written by Mallet, or that which Ramsay prints, is equal in pathos, character, and dramatic interest, to the ballad we copy from the "Reliques" of Dr. Percy. Every line is a picture; few compositions, even of old times, are more earnestly condensed; so thoroughly record a long history within a very limited space; or with so much eloquence bring before the mind the sad doom of the two lovers—the broken hearts of both.

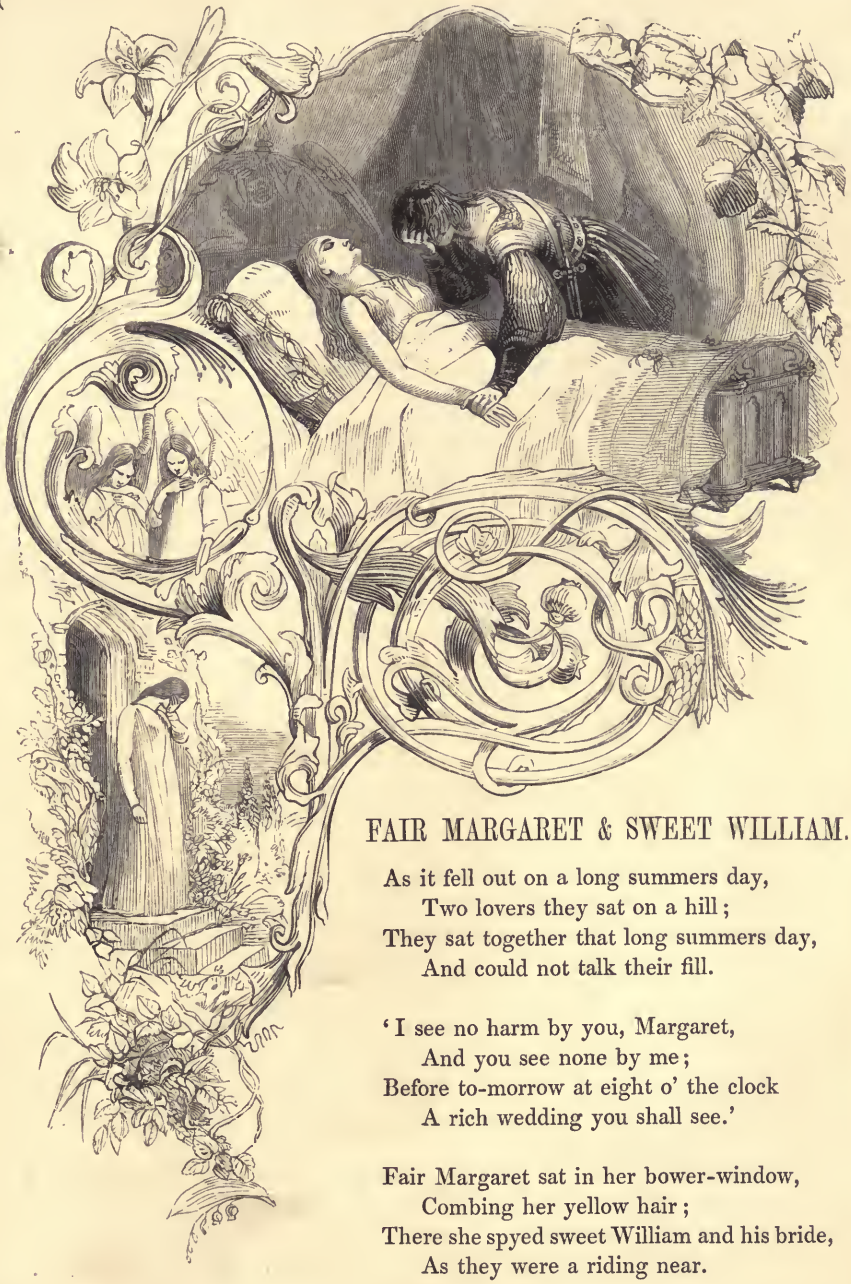
* It is this stanza that Fletcher quoted in "The Knight of the Burning Pestle," where "Merrythought" enters repeating it; altered somewhat, however, from the version of Dr. Percy, thus:—

When it was grown to dark midnight,
And all were fast asleep,
In came Margaret's grimly ghost,
And stood at William's feet!

Part of a verse is also quoted, which does not appear in the ballad, but which it is more than probable belonged to it:—

'You are no love for me Marg'ret,
I am no love for you.'

As the "stall copy," printed by Dr. Percy, was certainly subjected to some "ingenious alterations," the original was, perhaps, as a whole, infinitely superior even to the fine composition of which, only, we are at present possessed. It will be seen that the main incidents and the leading features are common to several ballads; and perhaps they were all derived from one great source.



FAIR MARGARET & SWEET WILLIAM.

As it fell out on a long summers day,
Two lovers they sat on a hill;
They sat together that long summers day,
And could not talk their fill.

'I see no harm by you, Margaret,
And you see none by me;
Before to-morrow at eight o' the clock
A rich wedding you shall see.'

Fair Margaret sat in her bower-window,
Combing her yellow hair;
There she spyed sweet William and his bride,
As they were a riding near.



Then down she layd her ivory combe,
And braided her hair in twain :—
She went alive out of her bower,
But ne'er came alive in 't again.

When day was gone, and night was come,
And all men fast asleep,
Then came the spirit of fair Marg'ret,
And stood at Williams feet.

'Are you awake, sweet William?' she said;
'Or, sweet William, are you asleep?
God give you joy of your gay bride-bed,
And me of my winding sheet.'

When day was come, and night was gone,
And all men waked from sleep,
Sweet William to his ladye sayd,
'My dear, I have cause to weep;

I dreamt a dream, my dear ladye,
Such dreams are never good:
I dreamt my bower was full of red wine,
And my bride-bed full of blood.'—

'Such dreams, such dreams, my honoured sir,
They never do prove good:
To dream thy bower was full of red wine,
And thy bride-bed full of blood.'

He called up his merry men all,
By one, by two, and by three;
Saying, 'I 'll away to fair Marg'rets bower,
By the leave of my ladye.'

And when he came to fair Marg'rets bower,
He knocked at the ring;
And who so ready as her seven brethren
To let sweet William in.



Then he turned up the covering-sheet,—
'Pray let me see the dead:
Methinks she looks all pale and wan,
She hath lost her cherry red.

I 'll do more for thee, Margaret,
Than any of thy kin;
For I will kiss thy pale wan lips,
Though a smile I cannot win.'

With that bespake the seven brethren,
Making most piteous mone:
'You may go kiss your jolly brown bride,
And let our sister alone.'

'If I do kiss my jolly brown bride,
I do but what is right;
I ne'er made a vow to yonder poor corpse
By day, nor yet by night.

* The following are the concluding stanzas of Jamieson's ballad, "Sweet Willie and Fair Annie":—

Pale Willie grew, wae was his heart,
And sair he sighed wi' teen:
'Oh Annie! had I kent thy worth,
Ere it o'er late had been!

It's I will kiss your bonny cheek,
And I will kiss your chin;
And I will kiss your clay-cald lip;
But I'll never kiss woman again.

And that I was in love outdone,
Sall ne'er be said o' me;
For as ye've died for me, Annie,
Sae will I do for thee!

The day ye deal at Annie's burial,
The bread but and the wine;
Before the morn at twall o'clock,
They'll deal the same at mine.'

The tane was buried in Mary's kirk,
The tither in Mary's quire;
And out o' the tane there grew a birk,
And out o' the tither a brier.

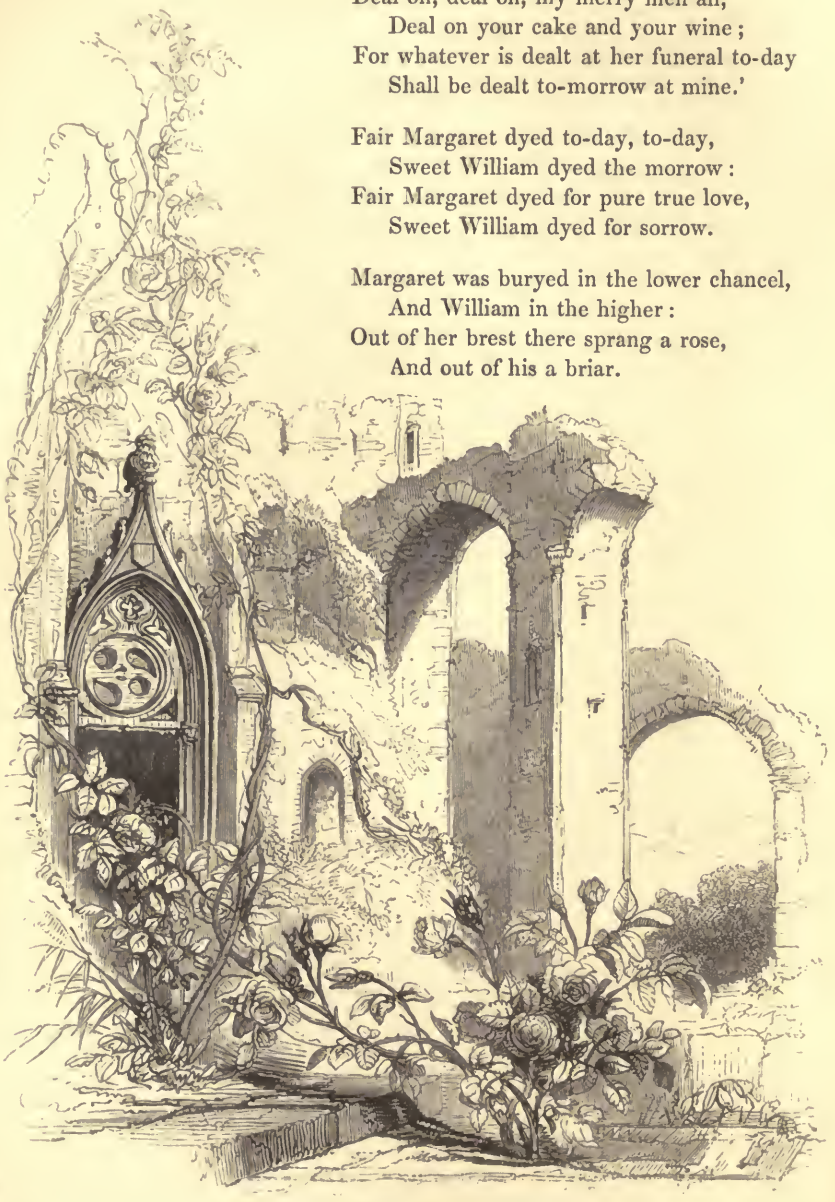
And ay they grew, and ay they drew,
Untill they twa did meet;
And every one that past them by,
Said, 'Thae's twa lovers sweet.'

Fair Margaret and Sweet William.

Deal on, deal on, my merry men all,
 Deal on your cake and your wine;
For whatever is dealt at her funeral to-day
 Shall be dealt to-morrow at mine.'

Fair Margaret dyed to-day, to-day,
 Sweet William dyed the morrow:
Fair Margaret dyed for pure true love,
 Sweet William dyed for sorrow.

Margaret was buryed in the lower chancel,
 And William in the higher:
Out of her brest there sprang a rose,
 And out of his a briar.



Warren, del

Jackson, sc.

THE BIRTH OF ST. GEORGE. This ballad, copied from the "Reliques of Ancient English Poetry," Dr. Percy confesses to be "for the most part modern." He probably derived some hints for the composition from his "folio MS;" but the greater portion of it bears evidence of being the production of his own pen. The incidents are chiefly taken from the old story-book of "The Seven Champions of Christendome," which, though now "the plaything of children," was once in high repute. It was written by "one Richard Johnson, who lived in the reigns of Elizabeth and James." So much doubt exists concerning the early history of this patron saint of the Order of the Garter, that his very existence has been questioned. Dr. Pettingal, in a "Dissertation on the original of the figure of St. George and the Dragon," published in 1753, discourses very learnedly on its symbolic meaning; declaring that it anciently typified the "malignity of the air (under the form of a serpent), purified, and made wholesome by the action of the sun" (symbolized by the mounted horseman). He asserts that the Egyptian gnostics used this symbol of the sun, in its propitious influences, as a device on their amulets, in expectation of victory, and that from them it descended to the christians. He engraves one of these antique amulets, from Montfauçon, which certainly bears a singular resemblance to St. George and the Dragon, and affirms it to be no saint, but an Arian of that name, and he thinks it unlikely that the orthodox western world should confer any distinction upon one they must have considered as a "pestilent heretic." Constantine, he says, placed on his coins a figure of himself, mounted on horseback, and destroying a serpent, to signify his triumph over the devil, or paganism. He combats the idea of charms or amulets being worn in England down to the ordination of the Garter, by an allusion to the laws which regulated trial by battle in the time of Edward III. and Richard II., when the duellists were sworn not to retain about their persons any "majicall" stone, or herb, or charm, &c. by which they might overcome their enemies.

Butler, in his "Lives of the Saints," says that the Saint became the patron of the military because he had been military himself, having been "tribune or colonel in the army" under the Emperor Dioclesian, who still further promoted him; all which posts he resigned when that emperor persecuted the christians, and for which he was beheaded. His apparition appeared to encourage the christian army under Godfrey of Bouilloigne and Richard I., in their expedition against the Saracens; and hence he was chosen as their patron saint, from the interest thus taken in the crusades. He adds, "St. George is usually painted on horseback, and tilting at a dragon under his feet; but this is no more than an emblematical figure, purporting, that, by faith and christian fortitude, he conquered the devil, called the dragon in the Apocalypse." Others imagine that St. Michael destroying the dragon is the origin of this representation of St. George.

The story of a saint, or deity, spearing a dragon, was known in the east from the earliest periods: among the Mahometans, a person called Gergis, or George, was revered as a prophet, and was so represented. Similar emblems have been discovered among other nations of the east. Whether these nations took it from the

Greeks, or the latter from them, cannot be ascertained; for, of the real existence of such a person as St. George, no positive proofs have ever been advanced.

Chancelor, the first Englishman who discovered Russia, speaking of a dispatch sent from Ivan Vassilievitch to Queen Mary, says that it had appended to it a seal "much like the broad seal of England, having on one side the image of a man on horseback, in complete armour, fighting with a dragon;" and this figure appeara to have been in common use by the Russian princes on their coins, &c., long before the institution of the Garter, in England, which took place on St. George's Day, April 23, 1350.

The representation of St. George, here copied, is from an illumination in a thick folio volume of Romanus, most splendidly ornamented, which was presented to King Henry VI. by Talbot, the great Earl of Shrewsbury, and which is now among the royal manuscripts in the British Museum. It shews us St. George, in complete armour, apearing the dragon; while behind stands the king's daughter who was about to be sacrificed to the monster, dressed in the costume of a lady of rank in the reign of Henry VI., and holding a lamb, typical, perhaps, of her purity, or innocence. To this circumstance reference is made in the old ballad of "St. George and the Dragon:"—



'Farewell, my father, dear,' quoth she,
'And my sweet mother meek and mild
Take you no thought, nor weep for me,
For you may have another child:
Since for my country's good I dye,
Death I receive most willinglye."

The king and queen, and all their train,
With weeping eyes went then their way,
And let their daughter there remain,
To be the hungry dragon's prey:
But as she did there weeping lye,
Behold St. George came riding by.

Dr. Percy, in his "Introduction" to the ballad, says, "the equestrian figure worn by the Knights of the Garter, has been understood to be an emblem of the christian warrior, in his spiritual armour, vanquishing the old aerpent." Independent of the figure of St. George and the Dragon, appended to the collar of the Order of the Garter, is the badge, worn on ordinary occasions by the knights, called "The George," and which was constantly worn in former times by the companions of the order. It was the figure of the Saint, on horseback, spesring the dragon, and was hung round the neck by a blue ribbon. There is an engraving, by Hollar, of the "George" worn by Charles I., and which that monarch gave to Bishop Juxon, on the scaffold, at his execution: it was made to open by a spring, like a locket, and contained a portrait of the Queen Henrietta Maria. Our engraving is a copy from the representation of this interesting relic.





The Birth of Saint George.

LISTEN, lords in bower and hall!
I sing the wonderous birth
Of brave St. George, whose valorous arm
Rid monsters from the earth!

W B Scott, del.

H. Vizetelly, sc

The Birth of St. George.



Distressèd ladies to relieve
He travelled many a day;
In honour of the christian faith,
Which shall endure for aye.

In Coventry sometime did dwell
A knight of worthy fame,
High steward of this noble realme,
Lord Albert was his name:

He had to wife a princely dame,
Whose beauty did excell,—
This virtuous lady, being with child,
In sudden sadness fell:

For thirty nights, no sooner sleep
Had closed her wakeful eyes,
But, lo! a foul and fearful dream
Her fancy would surprise:—

She dreamt a dragon fierce and fell
Conceived within her womb,
Whose mortal fangs her body rent
Ere he to life could come!

All woe-begone, and sad was she,
She nourisht constant woe;
Yet strove to hide it from her lord,
Lest he should sorrow know.

In vain she strove; her tender lord,
Who watched her slightest look,
Discovered soon her secret pain,
And soon that pain partook.

And when to him the fearful cause
She weeping did impart,
With kindest speech he strove to heal
The anguish of her heart.

W. B. Scott, del. H. Vizetelly, sc.

The Birth of St. George.



'Be comforted, my lady dear,
Those pearly drops refrain;
Betide me weal, betide me woe,
I 'll try to ease thy pain.

And for this foul and fearful dream,
That causeth all thy woe,
Trust me I 'll travel far away,
But I 'll the meaning knowe.'

Then giving many a fond embrace,
And shedding many a teare,
To the weïrd lady of the woods,
He purposed to repaire.

To the weïrd lady of the woods,
Full long and many a day,
Through lonely shades and thickets rough
He winds his weary way.

At length he reached a dreary dell
With dismal yews o'erhung;
Where cypress spred its mournful boughs,
And pois'nous nightshade sprung.

No chearful gleams here pierced the gloom,
He hears no chearful sound;
But shrill night-ravens' yelling scream,
And serpents hissing round.

The shriek of fiends and damned ghosts
Ran howling through his ear:
A chilling horror froze his heart,
Though all unused to fear.

Three times he strives to win his way,
And pierce those sickly dews:
Three times to bear his trembling corse
His knocking knees refuse.

The Birth of St. George.



At length upon his beating breast
He signs the holy crosse;
And, rouzing up his wonted might,
He treads th' unhallowed mosse.

Beneath a pendant craggy cliff,
All vaulted like a grave,
And opening in the solid rock,
He found the inchanted cave.

An iron gate closed up the mouth,
All hideous and forlorne;
And, fastened by a silver chain,
Near hung a brazed horne.

Then offering up a secret prayer,
Three times he blowes amaine:
Three times a deepe and hollow sound
Did answer him againe.

'Sir Knight, thy lady beares a son,
Who, like a dragon bright,
Shall prove most dreadful to his foes,
And terrible in fight.

His name, advanced in future times,
On banners shall be worn:
But, lo! thy lady's life must passe
Before he can be born.'

All sore opprest with fear and doubt
Long time Lord Albert stood;
At length he winds his doubtful way
Back through the dreary wood.

Eager to clasp his lovely dame,
Then fast he travels back;
But when he reached his castle gate,
His gate was hung with black.

W. B. Scott, del. Folkard, sc

The Birth of St. George.



In every court and hall he found
A sullen silence reigne;
Save where, amid the lonely towers,
He heard her maidens 'plaine;

And bitterly lament and weep,
With many a grievous grone:
Then sore his bleeding heart misgave,
His lady's life was gone.

With faultering step he enters in,
Yet half affraid to goe;
With trembling voice asks why they grieve,
Yet fears the cause to knowe.

'Three times the sun hath rose and set,'
They said, then stopt to weep,
'Since heaven hath laid thy lady deare
In death's eternal sleep.

For, ah! in travail sore she fell,
So sore that she must dye;
Unless some shrewd and cunning leech
Could ease her presentlye.

But when a cunning leech was fet,
Too soon declaréd he,
She, or her babe must lose its life;
Both savéd could not be.

Now take my life, thy lady said;
My little infant save:
And O! commend me to my lord,
When I am laid in grave.

O! tell him how that precious babe
Cost him a tender wife;
And teach my son to lisp her name,
Who died to save his life.



Then calling still upon thy name,
And praying still for thee,
Without repining or complaint,
Her gentle soul did flee.'

What tongue can paint Lord Albert's woe,—
The bitter tears he shed,—
The bitter pangs that wrung his heart,
To find his lady dead!

He beat his breast, he tore his hair,
And, shedding many a tear,
At length he askt to see his son—
The son that cost so dear.

New sorrowe seized the damsells all:
At length they faultering say:—
'Alas, my lord! how shall we tell?
Thy son is stoln away.

Fair as the sweetest flower of spring,
Such was his infant mien:
And on his little body stampt,
Three wonderous marks were seen:

A blood-red cross was on his arm;
A dragon on his breast;
A little garter all of gold
Was round his leg exprest.

Three carefull nurses we provide,
Our little lord to keep:
One gave him sucke, one gave him food,
And one did lull to sleep.

But, lo! all in the dead of night,
We heard a fearful sound:
Loud thunder clapt; the castle shook;
And lightning flasht around.



Dead with affright at first we lay;
But rousing up anon,
We ran to see our little lord—
Our little lord was gone!

But how or where we could not tell;
For, lying on the ground,
In deep and magic slumbers laid,
The nurses there we found.'

'O grief on grief!' Lord Albert said:
No more his tongue cou'd say,
When falling in a deadly swoone,
Long time he lifeless lay.

At length restored to life and sense,
He nourisht endless woe;
No future joy his heart could taste,
No future comfort know.

So withers on the mountain top
A fair and stately oake,
Whose vigorous arms are torn away
By some rude thunder-stroke.

At length his castle irksome grew,
He loathes his wonted home;
His native country he forsakes,
In foreign lands to roame.

There up and downe he wandered far,
Clad in a palmer's gown,
Till his brown locks grew white as wool,
His beard as thistle down.

At length, all wearied, down in death
He laid his reverend head.—
Meantime amid the lonely wilds
His little son was bred.

W. B. Scott, del. Folkard. sc.

The Birth of St. George.

There the weïrd lady of the woods
Had borne him far away;
And trained him up in feates of armes,
And every martial play.



W. B Scott del.

Armstrong, sc.

THE MERMAID. This beautiful ballad is the composition of Dr. John Leyden, and was originally published in the "Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border." It is founded, writes Sir Walter Scott, "upon a Gaelic traditional ballad called Macphail of Colonsay and the Mermaid of Corrivrekin." The dangerous gulf of Corrivrekin lies between the islands of Jura and Scarba, and the superstition of the islanders has tenanted its shelves and eddies with all the fabulous monsters and demons of the ocean. Among these, according to a universal tradition, the mermaid is the most remarkable. In her dwelling, and in her appearance, the mermaid of the northern nations resembles the siren of the ancients. "The Gaelic story bears, that Macphail of Colonsay was carried off by a mermaid, while passing the gulf above-mentioned: that they resided together, in a grotto beneath the sea, for several years, during which time she bore him five children: but finally, he tired of her society, and, having prevailed upon her to carry him near the shore of Colonsay, he escaped to land."

Legends of the mermaid, and of their loves for mortal men, are, however, common to nearly every country of the globe—so common, indeed, that many sensible authors have reasoned upon the probabilities of their actual existence; and some stories of their occasional appearances rest upon authorities that can scarcely be characterised as apocryphal. Sir Walter Scott, himself, in a note to the ballad, has a passage which may lead to the inference that he was by no means altogether sceptical on the subject. "I cannot help adding," he says, "that some late evidence has been produced, serving to shew, either that imagination played strange tricks with the witnesses, or that the existence of mermaids is no longer a matter of question. I refer to the letters written to Sir John Sinclair, by the spectators of such a phenomenon, in the bay of Sandside, in Caithness."* He adds that it would be easy to quote a variety of writers concerning the supposed being of these "marine people."—"The reader may consult the 'Telliamed' of M. Maillet, who, in support of the Neptunist system of geology, has collected a variety of legends, respecting mermen and mermaids, p. 230 et sequen. Much information may also be derived from Pontopiddan's 'Natural History of Norway,' who fails not to people her seas with this amphibious race. An older authority is to be found in the 'Kongs shuggsio, or Royal Mirror,' written, as it is believed, about 1170. The mermen, there mentioned, are termed hafstrambur (sea-giants), and are said to have the upper parts resembling the human race; but the author, with becoming diffidence, declines to state, positively, whether they are equipped with a dolphin's tail. The female monster is called Mar-Gyga (sea-giantess), and is averred certainly to drag a fish's train. She appears generally in the act of devouring fish, which she has caught. According to the apparent voracity of her appetite, the sailors pretend to guess what chance they had of saving their lives in the tempests, which always followed her appearance."

* The reader may remember that some years ago, "a veritable mermaid" was exhibited in London. The cheat was discovered, however, upon close examination. The lady of the sea had been manufactured in Japan, out of the upper part of an ourang outang and the tail of a fish.

In Cromek's "Remains of Nithsdale and Galloway song," was published a ballad, entitled "The Mermaid of Galloway;" understood to be the production of Mr. Allan Cunningham, who received the substance of the story "from tradition;" and "tradition," he states, "is yet rich with the fame of the bewitching mermaid. Her favourite haunts were along the shores of the Nith and Orr, and on the edge of the Solway Sea, which adjoins the mouth of those waters. Her beauty was such, that man could not behold her face, but his heart was fired by unquenchable love; and, as usual, whenever she was seen, she was occupied in combing her "long hair of burning gold." "According to Lowland mythology," he adds, "they are a race of goddesses, corrupted with earthly passions; their visits to the world, though few and far between, are spoken of and remembered with awe; their affections were bestowed on men of exalted virtue and rare endowment of persons and parts. They wooed in such a strain of syren eloquence, that all hearts were fettered by the witcheries of love. When their celestial voice dropt on the ear, every other faculty was enthralled. They caught the beloved object in their embrace, and laid him on a couch, where mortal eyes might search in vain into the rites of such romantic and mysterious wedlock." The hero of this story is said to have been one of the Maxwells, of Cowehill: he is wiled away from the arms of his betrothed bride by a song of the syren,—"the sweetest sang ere brake frae a lip;" lulled to sleep among the water-lilies; and taken over the white "sea-faem;" while the earthly damsel is left to mourn his loss. The mystery of his disappearance is, however, thus explained to her:—

It was I' the mid-hour o' the night,
Her siller bell did ring;
An' soun't as if nae earthlie hand
Had pou'd the silken string.

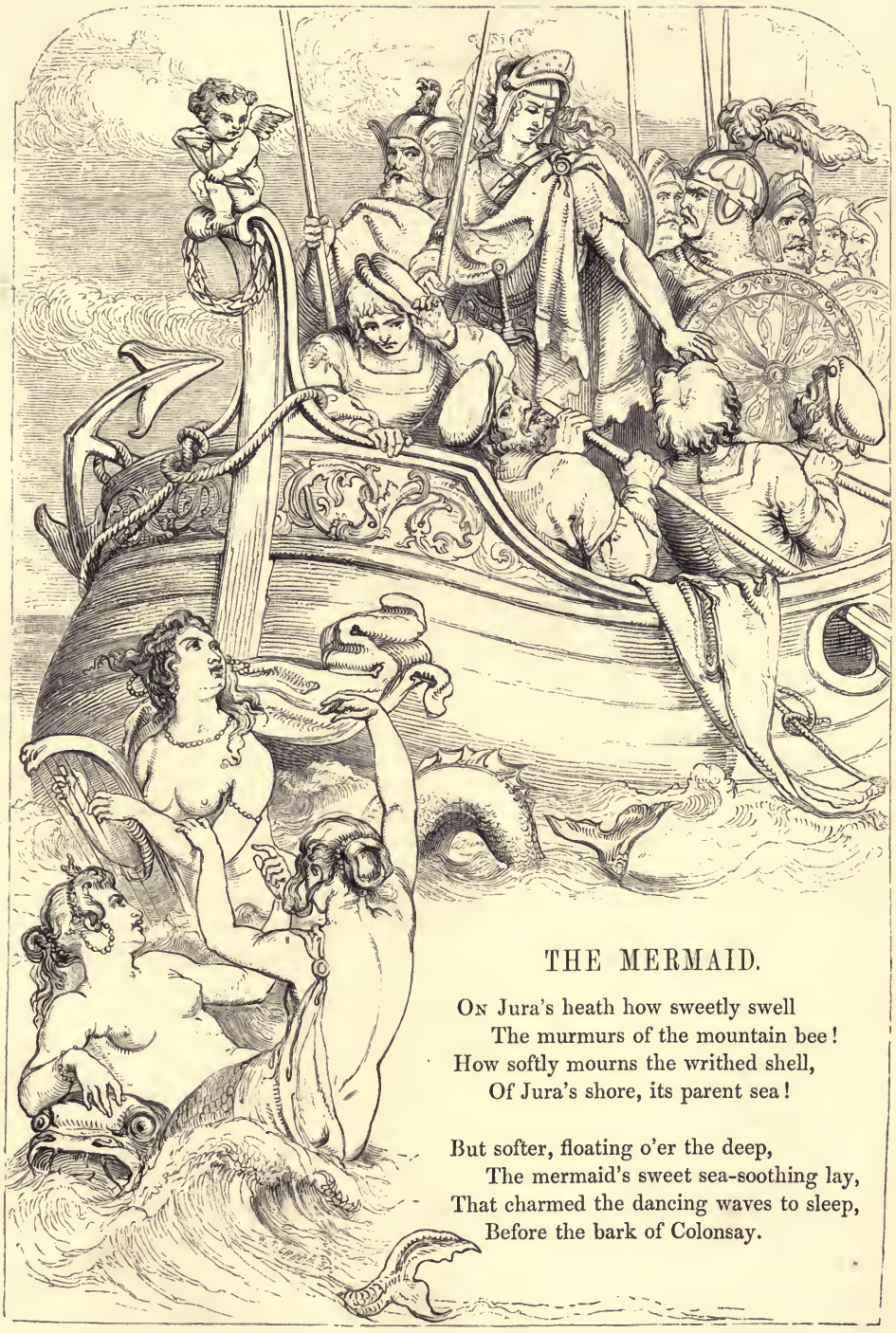
There was a cheek touch'd that ladye's,
Cauld as the marble stane;
An' a hand cauld as the drifting snaw,
Was laid on her breast-bane.

'O cauld is thy hand, my dear Willie;
O cauld, cauld is thy cheek;
An' wring thae locks o' yellow hair,
Frae which the cauld draps dreep.'

'O seek another bridegroom, Marie,
On thae bosom-faulds to sleep;
My bride is the yellow water-lilie,
Its leaves my brydal sheet!'

Mr. Cunningham records two or three striking anecdotes relative to the popular belief, and Sir Walter Scott supplies others; the most remarkable, however, are told by Waldron, in his "History of the Isle of Man." One of them we copy:—"A very beautiful mermaid fell in love with a young shepherd, who kept his flocks beside a creek much frequented by these marine people. She frequently caressed him, and brought him presents of coral, fine pearls, and every valuable production of the ocean. Once upon a time, as she threw her arms eagerly round him, he suspected her of a design to draw him into the sea, and, struggling hard, disengaged himself from her embrace, and ran away. But the mermaid resented either the suspicion, or the disappointment, so highly, that she threw a stone after him, and flung herself into the sea, whence she never returned. The youth, though but slightly struck with the pebble, felt, from that moment, the most excruciating agony, and died at the end of seven days." In Ireland, stories of the mermaid—there called the "Merrow"—are very abundant; we have conversed with many of the peasants who would readily depose, upon oath, to having repeatedly seen them; and there, as well as elsewhere, they are always encountered

Combing their yellow hair.



THE MERMAID.

On Jura's heath how sweetly swell
The murmurs of the mountain bee!
How softly mourns the writhed shell,
Of Jura's shore, its parent sea!

But softer, floating o'er the deep,
The mermaid's sweet sea-soothing lay,
That charmed the dancing waves to sleep,
Before the bark of Colonsay.

Franklin, del. 26 Green sc.

The Mermaid.



Aloft the purple pennons wave,
As parting gay from Crinan's shore,
From Morven's wars the seamen brave
Their gallant chieftain homeward bore.

In youth's gay bloom, the brave Macphail
Still blamed the lingering bark's delay;
For her he chid the flagging sail,
The lovely Maid of Colonsay.

And 'raise,' he cried, 'the song of love,
The maiden sung with tearful smile,
When first, o'er Jura's hills to rove,
We left afar the lonely isle!—

When on this ring of ruby red
Shall die,' she said, 'the crimson hue,
Know that thy favourite fair is dead,
Or proves to thee and love untrue.'

Now, lightly poised, the rising oar
Disperses wide the foamy spray,
And, echoing far o'er Crinan's shore,
Resounds the song of Colonsay.

'Softly blow, thou western breeze,
Softly rustle through the sail!
Soothe to rest the furrowy seas,
Before my love, sweet western gale!

Where the wave is tinged with red,
And the russet sea-leaves grow,
Mariners, with prudent dread,
Shun the shelving reefs below.

As you pass through Jura's sound,
Bend your course by Scarba's shore,
Shun, O shun, the gulf profound,
Where Corrivrekin's surges roar!



If, from that unbottomed deep,
With wrinkled form and wreathed train,
O'er the verge of Scarba's steep,
The sea-snake heave his snowy mane,

Unwarp, unwind his oozy coils,
Sea-green sisters of the main,
And, in the gulf where ocean boils,
The unwieldy wallowing monster chain.

Softly blow, thou western breeze,
Softly rustle through the sail!
Soothe to rest the furrowed seas,
Before my love, sweet western gale!'

Thus, all to soothe the chieftain's woe,
Far from the maid he loved so dear,
The song arose so soft and slow,
He seemed her parting sigh to hear.

The lonely deck he paces o'er,
Impatient for the rising day,
And still, from Crinan's moonlight shore,
He turns his eyes to Colonsay.

The moonbeams crisp the curling surge,
That streaks with foam the ocean green:
While forward still the rowers urge
Their course, a female form was seen.

That sea-maid's form, of pearly light,
Was whiter than the downy spray,
And round her bosom, heaving bright,
Her glossy yellow ringlets play.

Borne on a foamy-crested wave,
She reached amain the bounding prow,
Then clasping fast the chieftain brave,
She, plunging, sought the deep below.



Ah! long beside thy feignéd bier,
The monks the prayers of death shall say,
And long, for thee, the fruitless tear,
Shall weep the Maid of Colonsay!

But downwards, like a powerless corse,
The eddying waves the chieftain bear;
He only heard the moaning hoarse
Of waters, murmuring in his ear.

The murmurs sink by slow degrees;
No more the surges round him rave;
Lulled by the music of the seas,
He lies within a coral cave.

In dreamy mood reclines he long,
Nor dares his trancéd eyes unclose;
Till, warbling wild, the sea-maid's song,
Far in the crystal cavern rose;

Soft as that harp's unseen control,
In morning dreams which lovers hear,
Whose strains steal sweetly o'er the soul,
But never reach the waking ear.

As sunbeams through the tepid air,
When clouds dissolve the dews unseen,
Smile on the flowers that bloom more fair,
And fields that glow with livelier green;

So melting soft the music fell;
It seemed to soothe the fluttering spray—
'Say, heardst thou not these wild notes swell?'
'Ah! 't is the song of Colonsay.'

Like one that from a fearful dream
Awakes, the morning light to view,
And joys to see the purple beam,
Yet fears to find the vision true,—



He heard that strain, so wildly sweet,
Which bade his torpid languor fly;
He feared some spell had bound his feet,
And hardly dared his limbs to try.

'This yellow sand, this sparry cave,
Shall bend thy soul to beauty's sway;
Canst thou the maiden of the wave
Compare to her of Colonsay?'

Roused by that voice of silver sound,
From the paved floor he lightly sprung,
And glancing wild his eyes around,
Where the fair nymph her tresses wrung,

No form he saw of mortal mould;
It shone like ocean's snowy foam;
Her ringlets waved in living gold,
Her mirror crystal, pearl her comb.

Her pearly comb the siren took,
And careless bound her tresses wild;
Still o'er the mirror stole her look,
As on the wondering youth she smiled.

Like music from the greenwood tree,
Again she raised the melting lay;—
'Fair warrior, wilt thou dwell with me,
And leave the Maid of Colonsay?

Fair is the crystal hall for me,
With rubies and with emeralds set;
And sweet the music of the sea
Shall sing, when we for love are met.

How sweet to dance with gliding feet,
Along the level tide so green;
Responsive to the cadence sweet,
That breathes along the moonlight scene!



And soft the music of the main
Rings from the motley tortoise-shell ;
While moonbeams, o'er the watery plain,
Seem trembling in its fitful swell.

How sweet, when billows heave their head,
And shake their snowy crests on high,
Serene in Ocean's sapphire-bed,
Beneath the tumbling surge to lie ;

To trace, with tranquil step, the deep,
Where pearly drops of frozen dew,
In concave shells, unconscious, sleep,
Or shine with lustre, silvery blue !

Then shall the summer sun, from far,
Pour through the wave a softer ray ;
While diamonds, in a bower of spar,
At eve shall shed a brighter day.

Nor stormy wind, nor wintry gale,
That o'er the angry ocean sweep,
Shall e'er our coral groves assail,
Calm in the bosom of the deep.

Through the green meads beneath the sea,
Enamoured, we shall fondly stray ;
Then, gentle warrior, dwell with me,
And leave the Maid of Colonsay !'

'Though bright thy locks of glistering gold,
Fair maiden of the foamy main !
Thy life-blood is the water cold,
While mine beats high in every vein.

If I beneath thy sparry cave,
Should in thy snowy arms recline,
Inconstant as the restless wave,
My heart would grow as cold as thine.'

The Mermaid.



As cygnet down, proud swelled her breast,
Her eye confessed the pearly tear;
His hand she to her bosom pressed—
'Is there no heart for rapture here?

These limbs, sprung from the lucid sea,
Does no warm blood their currents fill;
No heart-pulse riot, wild and free,
To joy, to love's delirious thrill?'

'Though all the splendour of the sea
Around thy faultless beauty shine,
That heart that riots wild and free,
Can hold no sympathy with mine.

These sparkling eyes, so wild and gay,
They swim not in the light of love:
The beauteous Maid of Colonsay,
Her eyes are milder than the dove!

Even now, within the lonely isle,
Her eyes are dim with tears for me;
And canst thou think that siren smile
Can lure my soul to dwell with thee?'

An oozy film her limbs o'erspread;
Unfolds in length her scaly train:
She tossed, in proud disdain, her head,
And lashed, with webbéd fin, the main.

'Dwell here alone!' the mermaid cried,
'And view far off the sea-nymphs play;
Thy prison wall, the azure tide,
Shall bar thy steps from Colonsay.

Whene'er, like Ocean's scaly brood,
I cleave with rapid fin, the wave,
Far from the daughter of the flood,
Conceal thee in this coral cave.



I feel my former soul return ;
It kindles at thy cold disdain :
And has a mortal dared to spurn
A daughter of the foamy main ?'

She fled ; around the crystal cave
The rolling waves resume their road ;
On the broad portal idly rave,
But enter not the nymph's abode.

And many a weary night went by,
As in the lonely cave he lay ;
And many a sun rolled through the sky,
And poured its beams on Colonsay.

And oft, beneath the silver moon,
He heard afar the mermaid sing,
And oft, to many a melting tune,
The shell-formed lyres of ocean ring.

And when the moon went down the sky,
Still rose, in dreams, his native plain,
And oft he thought his love was by,
And charmed him with some tender strain.

And heart-sick, oft he waked to weep,
When ceased that voice of silver sound ;
And thought to plunge him in the deep,
That walled his crystal cavern round.

But still the ring of ruby red,
Retained its vivid crimson hue ;
And each despairing accent fled,
To find his gentle love so true.

When seven long lonely months were gone,
The mermaid to his cavern came ;
No more mis-shapen from the zone,
But like a maid of mortal frame.



'O give to me that ruby ring,
That on thy finger glances gay,
And thou shalt hear the mermaid sing
The song thou lov'st of Colonsay.'

'This ruby ring, of crimson grain,
Shall on thy finger glitter gay,
If thou wilt bear me through the main,
Again to visit Colonsay.'

'Except thou quit thy former love,
Content to dwell for aye with me,
Thy scorn my finny frame might move,
To tear thy limbs amid the sea.'

'Then bear me swift along the main,
The lonely isle again to see;
And when I here return again,
I plight my faith to dwell with thee.'

An oozy film her limbs o'erspread,
While slow unfolds her scaly train,
With gluey fangs her hands were clad,
She lashed, with webbéd fin the main.

He grasps the mermaid's scaly sides,
As, with broad fin, she oars her way;
Beneath the silent moon she glides,
That sweetly sleeps on Colonsay.

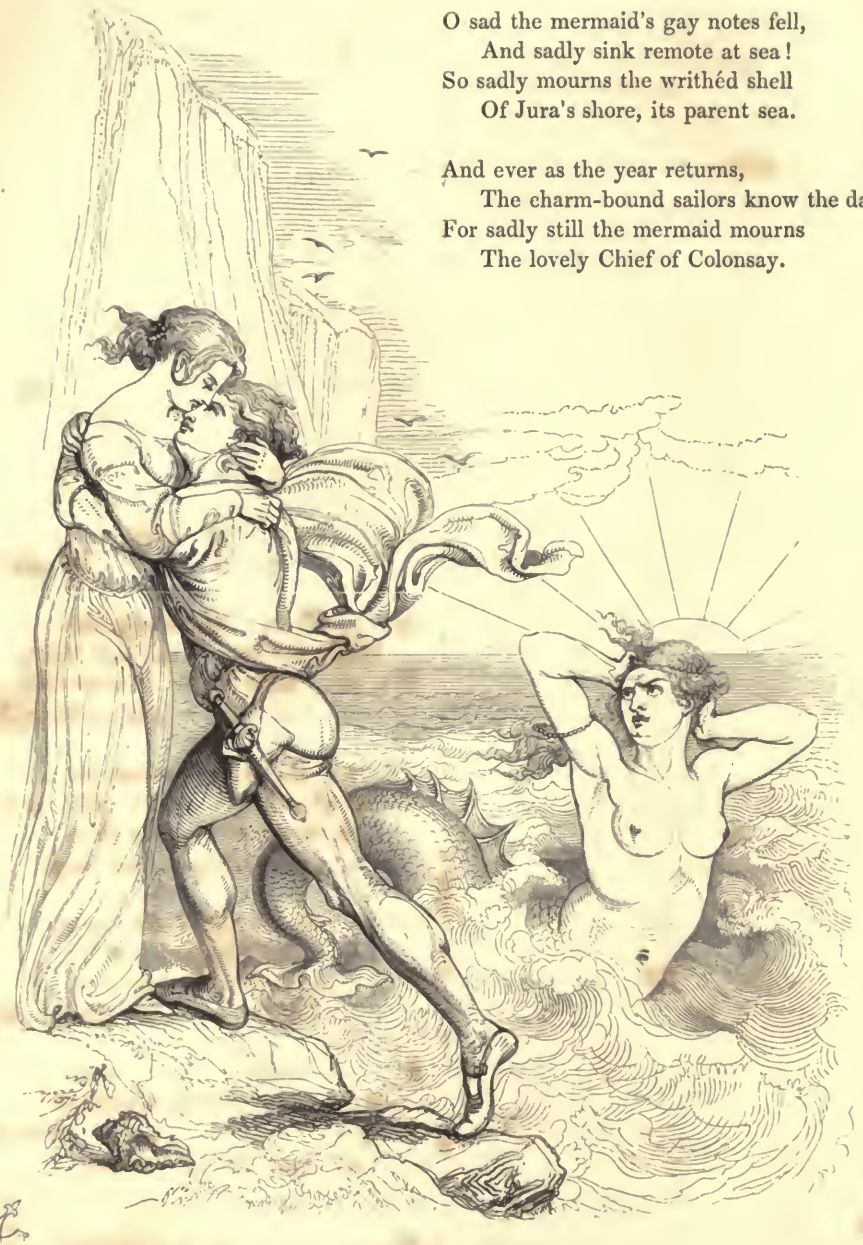
Proud swells her heart! she deems, at last,
To lure him with her silver tongue,
And, as the shelving rocks she passed,
She raised her voice, and sweetly sung.

In softer sweeter strains she sung,
Slow gliding o'er the moonlight bay,
When light to land the chieftain sprung,
To hail the Maid of Colonsay.

The Mermaid.

O sad the mermaid's gay notes fell,
And sadly sink remote at sea!
So sadly mourns the writhéd shell
Of Jura's shore, its parent sea.

And ever as the year returns,
The charm-bound sailors know the day;
For sadly still the mermaid mourns
The lovely Chief of Colonsay.



Franklin, del. Armstrong, sc.



ORD ULLIN'S DAUGHTER. Few modern ballads have obtained greater celebrity than this—the composition of Thomas Campbell; and none are more justly entitled to the universal popularity it has acquired. It is one of his earlier productions; written when in the zenith of his fame, and when, in the vigour of his conceptions and the grace and delicacy of his versification, he was entirely unapproached. It has stood the test of time, and will be for ever classed among the finest and most touching contributions to the ballad lore of Britain. The author has left us to our own speculations as to whether the poem was suggested by any actual occurrence, or is the result of pure invention. It is more than probable, however, that in the vast store-house of Scottish history, he obtained some record of a real event, which formed the ground-work of his story; and that neither "Lord Ullin," nor the "Chief of Ulva's isle," nor the "winsome lady," are altogether fictitious. The incident of a young chieftain bearing away the daughter of a rival house is, indeed, common enough in Scottish ballad lore. Thus in the "Douglas tragedy," already quoted, the youth and maiden are followed by the "angry father;" and in "the Child of Elle,"

Faire Emmeline scant had ridden a mile,
A mile forth of the towne,
When she was aware of her father's men
Come galloping over the downe.

In a ballad entitled "Sweet Willie and Lady Margerie," printed by Motherwell, "from the recitation of a lady now far advanced in years," the lady falls in love with "a widow's son," and while they are sitting together,

She turned her back unto the wa',
Her face unto the room, O;
And there she saw her auld father,
Fast walking up and down, O.

In then came her father dear,
And a braid sword by his gare, O;
And he 's gien Willie, the widow's son,
A deep wound and a sair, O.

She turned her back unto the room,
Her face unto the wa', O;
And with a deep and heavy sigh,
Her heart it brak' in twa, O.

In "Sir James the Rose," the knight approaches the window of his lady-love, the daughter of a rival chief, "and thus began to call,"

'Art thou asleep, Matilda, dear?
Awake, my love, awake;
Thy luckless lover on thee calls,
A long farewell to take.

For I have slain fierce Donald Græme,
His blood is on my sword;
And distant are my faithful men,
That should assist their lord.

To Sky I 'll now direct my way,
Where my twa brothers bide,
And raise the valiant of the isles,
To combat on my side.'

But, although occurrences, such as these, are to be found recorded in many ancient ballads, and history abounds in facts of a similar character, we have met with no incident in either, that may be supposed to have suggested the touching story which the poet has so happily imagined, and so beautifully expressed.

Loch Gyle, or Goil, is an arm of Loch Long, a salt water loch, both being fed by the Frith of Clyde. Loch Goil is in the country of Lachlan Mac Lachlan, of Castle Lachlan, chief of the clan Lachlan, parish of Lachlan, Strath Lachlan, Argyleshire; being very near the "countries" of the wild Macfarlanes, the Colquhouns, Macgregors, and, above all, the "bludie children of Diarmid" (Campbells), it has been the site of many a glorious clan feud. It is within a few miles of the residence of Fletcher of Dunans, known by his Gaelic cognomen of Angus More (Angus the Great), one of the finest specimens of a Highland gentleman in all the west country; distinguished for the zeal with which he and his family have adhered to the faith of his fathers, and for the usual Highland attributes, hospitality and courage—never backward in exerting either.

Although Campbell has contributed but little to the store-house of British ballads, that little is of vast value; unquestionably, no modern poet has so completely rivalled the old masters of song, or combined, in so remarkable a manner, the condensed vigour of the ancient minstrel with a grace peculiarly his own. In the loftier purpose of the poet, too, he has gone hand-in-hand with the earlier "ballad-makers," aiming to perpetuate national fame, and encourage national greatness, while celebrating national glories. The "Mariners of England," and the "Battle of the Baltic," will endure as long as the memory of Nelson, or while it may be said of Britannia,

> Her march is o'er the mountain wave,
> Her home is on the deep.

From Ireland, also, he claims the debt of gratitude; few productions of the pen have directed more attention towards its people, or excited stronger sympathy for their sufferings and devotion to their native land, than the true, and touching, and pathetic ballad of "the exile," who

> Sang the bold anthem of Erin go bragh!

The poetry of Campbell is, indeed, universally felt, and, therefore, universally appreciated. His appeals are made to sensations that are common to mankind. While it can bear the test of the severest criticism, it is intelligible to the simplest understanding. It speaks to the heart as well as the mind, and is as music to the ear. If he labours hard—as we believe he does—to render his verse easy and harmonious, he never permits the reader to suspect, that care to refine has lessened the power of conception. He affords no evidence of fastidiousness in the choice of words, yet they always seem the fittest for his purpose, and are not pressed into his service. He combines the rare qualities—not often met together—strength and smoothness; yet his strength is never coarse, and his delicacy is never effeminate. Above all, it is to his "eternal praise," that he has sought for themes only where a pure mind seeks them; turning from the grosser passions, the meaner desires, and the vulgar sentiments of man, as unworthy the high calling of the poet.

Lord Ullin's Daughter.



A CHIEFTAIN, to the Highlands bound,
Cries, 'Boatman, do not tarry!
And I'll give thee a silver pound
To row us o'er the ferry.'—

'Now, who be ye would cross Lochgyle,
This dark and stormy water?'
'O, I 'm the chief of Ulva's Isle,
And this Lord Ullin's daughter.

E.J. Corbould, del. S. Williams, sc.



And fast before her father's men,
Three days we 've fled together;
For should he find us in the glen,
My blood would stain the heather.

His horsemen hard behind us ride;
Should they our steps discover,
Then who will cheer my bonny bride,
When they have slain her lover?'

Out spoke the hardy Highland wight,
'I 'll go, my chief—I 'm ready:—
It is not for your silver bright,
But for your winsome lady:

And, by my word! the bonny bird
In danger shall not tarry;
So, though the waves are raging white,
I 'll row you o'er the ferry.'

By this the storm grew loud apace,
The water-wraith was shrieking;
And in the scowl of heaven each face
Grew dark as they were speaking.

But still as wilder blew the wind,
And as the night grew drearer,
Adown the glen rode arméd men;
Their trampling sounded nearer.

'O haste thee, haste!' the lady cries,
'Though tempests round us gather;
I 'll meet the raging of the skies,
But not an angry father.'

The boat has left a stormy land,
A stormy sea before her,—
When, Oh! too strong for human hand,
The tempest gather'd o'er her.



And still they row'd amidst the roar
Of waters fast prevailing:
Lord Ullin reached that fatal shore,
His wrath was changed to wailing.

For sore dismay'd, through storm and shade,
His child he did discover;
One lovely hand she stretch'd for aid,
And one was round her lover.

'Come back! come back!' he cried in grief,
'Across this stormy water;
And I 'll forgive your Highland chief.
My daughter! Oh! my daughter!'—*

* In a ballad, entitled "Duncan," printed by Herd, are some vigorous and beautiful stanzas, which describe the meeting of the lover and the uncle of a lady who has been taken from her "old home:—"

'The rose I pluckt o' right is mine,
Our hearts together grew
Like twa sweet roses on ae stalk;
Frae hate to love they flew.'

He stampt his foot upo' the ground,
And thus in wrath did say,
'God strike my saul, if frae this field,
We baith in life shall gae.'

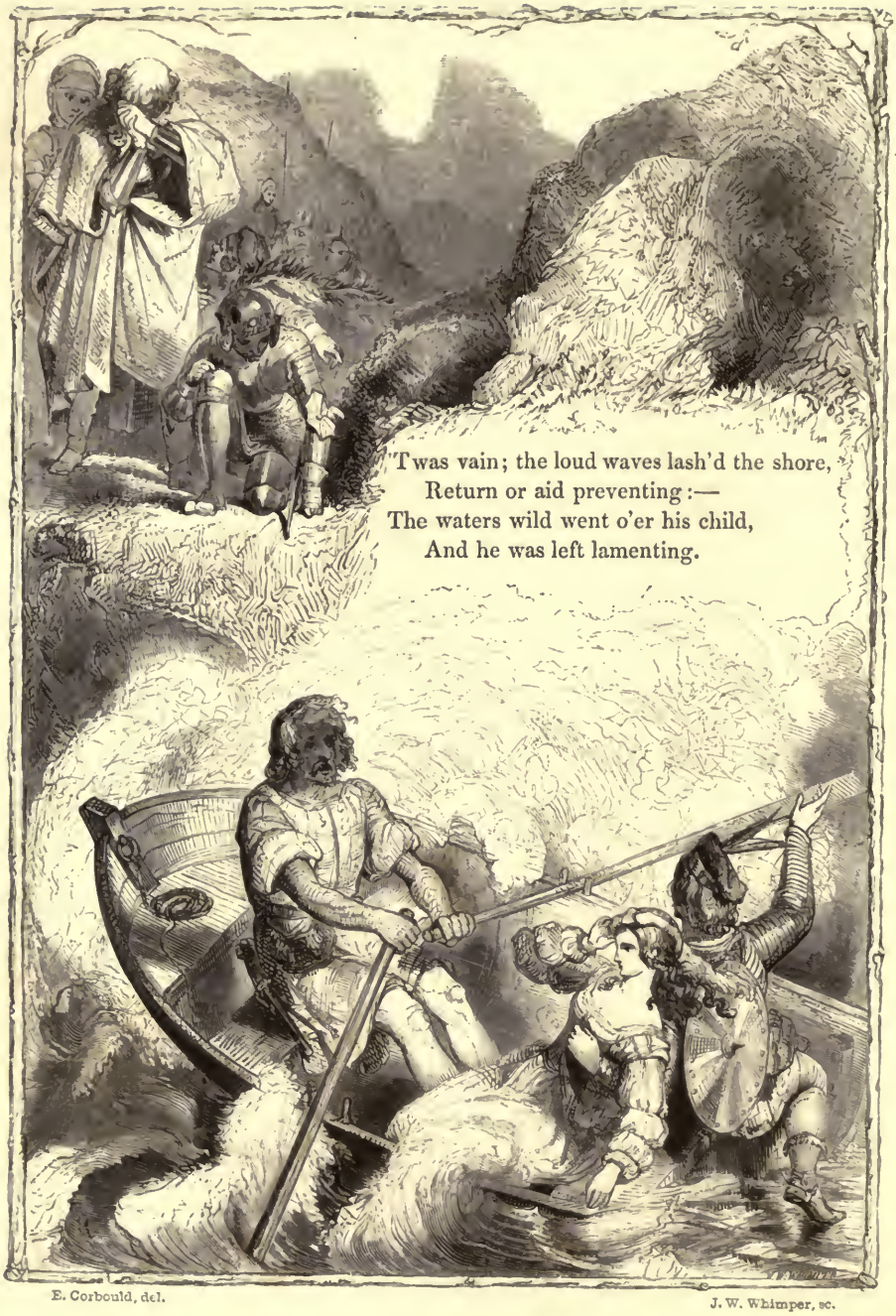
He wav'd his hand, the pipers play'd,
The targets clatter'd round;
And now between the meeting faes
Was little space of ground.

But wha is she that runs sae fast?
Her feet nae stap they find;
Sae swiftly rides the milky cloud,
Upo' the summer's wind.

Her face a mantle screen'd afore,
She show'd of lily hue;
Sae frae the grey mist breaks the sun,
To drink the morning dew.

'Alack! my friends; what sight is this?
O stap your rage,' she cry'd;
'Whar love with honey'd lips should be,
Mak not a breach sae wide.'

* * * *



E. Corbould, del.

J. W. Whimper, sc.

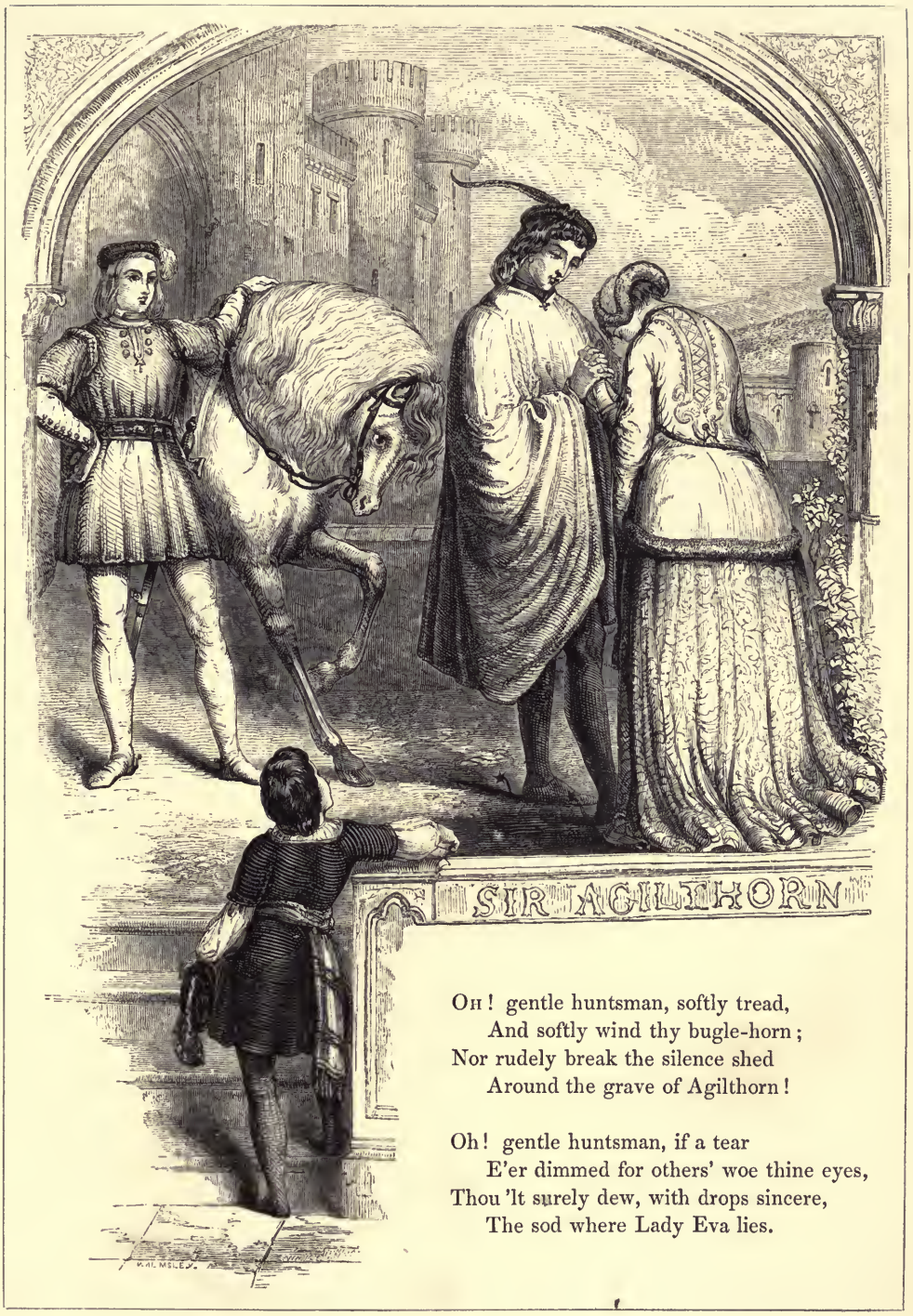
SIR AGILTHORN. This ballad is the production of Matthew Gregory Lewis; and our principal motive in introducing it into this collection is to supply an example of his compositions, for its merits are not such as to warrant the selection upon other grounds. His writings, although now nearly forgotten, had, at one period, no inconsiderable influence upon the literature of the age; the success that attended his publications induced a host of imitators, and, for awhile, his "school" may be almost said to have formed the taste of the country. But the unnatural will be always the ephemeral; and that which is not based upon Truth, Time will be certain to destroy. With the exception of two or three of his more romantic ballads—"Alonzo the Brave and Fair Imogene," and, perhaps, "Osric the Lion"—the poems of Lewis are as completely consigned to oblivion as if they had never been printed; even his vain and useless "Romances," which have passed through numerous editions, are now seldom read; and are re-published only by caterers for the meretricious or the vicious. Merit of a particular order he undoubtedly had; public attention is never obtained, even for a season, without it; but his works possessed very little of real value, and the world has lost nothing by the obscurity into which they have sunk. He was "the first to introduce something like the German taste into English fictitious, dramatic, and poetical composition;" and no less an authority than Sir Walter Scott considers that he did service to our literature by shewing, that "the prevailing taste of Germany might be employed as a formidable auxiliary to renewing the spirit of our own, upon the same system as when medical persons attempt, by the transfusion of blood, to pass into the veins of an aged and exhausted patient, the vivacity of the circulation and liveliness of sensation which distinguish a young subject." It is certain, that at the period in which he "flourished," English literature had become sluggish, inert, and comparatively valueless; while "the realms of Parnassus," more especially, seemed to lie open to the first bold invader, whether he should be a daring usurper, or could shew a legitimate title of sovereignty.* Lewis was "born to fortune;" his father held the lucrative appointment of under-secretary at war; and he was himself a member of parliament as soon as his age permitted him to occupy a seat. During a residence in Germany, he had opportunities of indulging his inclination for the marvellous; and he and his imitators, towards the close of the last century, absolutely flooded the libraries of Great Britain with their tales of enchantment and diablerie, in poetry and prose. Lewis's publications are the romances of "The Monk," "Feudal Tyrants," and "Romantic Tales;" "Tales of Wonder" and "Tales of Terror," in verse; "The Castle Spectre" and "Adelmorn," romantic dramas; "Venoni," a tragedy; a volume of miscellaneous

* "Lewis was a martinet, if I may so term him, in the accuracy of rhymes and of numbers: I may add he had a right to be so, for few persons have exhibited more mastery of rhyme, or greater command over the melody of verse." * * * * "His works were admired, and the author became famous, not merely through his own merit, though that was of no mean quality, but because he had in some measure taken the public by surprise, by using a style of composition, which, like national melodies, is so congenial to the general taste, that, though it palls by being much hackneyed, it has only to be for a short time forgotten in order to recover its original popularity."—SIR WALTER SCOTT.

poetry, and the "Bravo of Venice," a translation from the German. He died in 1818, while on his voyage home from a visit to his patrimonial property in Jamaica. An idle story has been circulated, that his death was occasioned by poison, administered to him by a negro whom he had incautiously acquainted with his intention to emancipate the whole of his slaves at his decease.

His volumes of ballads, "Tales of Wonder" and "Tales of Terror," were comparative failures; to the first, Sir Walter Scott, Southey, Leyden, and others, contributed, and their contributions sufficed to give value to the work. It was published in 1801, "for the author." Lewis, however, was tempted to "drive it out" into two volumes, royal 8vo., which were sold at a high price. "Purchasers murmured at finding this size had been attained by the insertion of some of the best known pieces of the English language, such as Dryden's 'Theodore and Honoria,' Parnell's 'Hermit,' Lisle's 'Porsenna, King of Russia,' and many other popular poems of old date, and generally known, which ought not in conscience to have made part of a set of tales, 'written and collected' by a modern author." The consequence was, that the costly and weighty volumes met with little or no public approval. What had been at first received as simple and natural, was now sneered at as puerile and extravagant. "Another objection was," adds Sir Walter Scott, "that my friend Lewis had a high but mistaken opinion of his own powers of humour. The truth was, that though he could throw some gaiety into his lighter pieces, after the manner of the French writers, his attempts at what is called pleasantry in English wholly wanted the quality of humour, and were generally failures. But this he would not allow; and the 'Tales of Wonder' were filled, in a sense, with attempts at comedy, which might be generally accounted abortive."

One important consequence, at least, followed this introduction of a new style into our literature; to his acquaintance with Lewis we are probably indebted for the vast store-house of wealth bequeathed to us by Sir Walter Scott. "Finding Lewis," he says, "in possession of so much reputation, and conceiving that if I fell behind him in poetical powers, I considerably exceeded him in general information, I suddenly took it into my head to attempt the style of poetry by which he had raised himself to fame;" and, he adds, "out of an accidental acquaintance" with the popular author, which "increased into a sort of intimacy, consequences arose which altered almost all the Scottish ballad-maker's future prospects in life." He was first stimulated to the translation of some German ballads; and soon acquired confidence to attempt "the imitation of what he admired." Lewis had, about this period, announced the publication of a work, the title of which sufficiently indicates its character—"Tales of Wonder,"—and to this work Scott readily agreed to contribute. It was published in two volumes, in the year 1801; and contained, among others, the ballads of "Glenfinlas" and the "Eve of Saint John," by Sir Walter—compositions which he can scarcely be said to have afterwards surpassed. The encouragement the young author here met with, led to the collection and subsequent publication of the "Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border," originally printed by James Ballantyne, at Kelso. What "great events from little causes flow!"—possibly if "Monk Lewis" had never existed as a versifier, the genius of Scott might have been directed into some less serviceable channel; for, mainly out of the trivial circumstances here briefly recorded, he "gradually, and almost insensibly, engaged himself in that species of literary employment"—"modern imitations of the ancient ballad."



Oh! gentle huntsman, softly tread,
And softly wind thy bugle-horn;
Nor rudely break the silence shed
Around the grave of Agilthorn!

Oh! gentle huntsman, if a tear
E'er dimmed for others' woe thine eyes,
Thou 'lt surely dew, with drops sincere,
The sod where Lady Eva lies.

R. Redgrave, A. R.A., del. Walmsley, sc.



Yon crumbling chapel's sainted bound
Their hands and hearts beheld them plight;
Long held yon towers, with ivy crowned,
The beauteous dame and gallant knight.

Alas! the hour of bliss is past,
For hark! the din of discord rings;
War's clarion sounds, Joy hears the blast,
And trembling plies his radiant wings.

And must sad Eva lose her lord?
And must he seek the martial plain?
Oh! see she brings his casque and sword!
Oh! hark, she pours her plaintive strain!

'Blessed is the village damsel's fate,
Though poor and low her station be;
Safe from the cares which haunt the great,
Safe from the cares which torture me!

No doubting fear, no cruel pain,
No dread suspense her breast alarms;
No tyrant honour rules her swain,
And tears him from her folding arms.

She, careless wandering 'midst the rocks,
In pleasing toil consumes the day;
And tends her goats, or feeds her flocks,
Or joins her rustic lover's lay.

Though hard her couch, each sorrow flies
The pillow which supports her head;
She sleeps, nor fears at morn her eyes
Shall wake, to mourn a husband dead.

Hush, impious fears! the good and brave,
Heaven's arm will guard from danger free;
When death with thousands gluts the grave,
His dart, my love, shall glance from thee;

R. Redgrave, A.R.A., del. Pastic. sc.



While thine shall fly direct and sure,
This buckler every blow repel;
This casque from wounds that face secure,
Where all the loves and graces dwell.

This glittering scarf, with tenderest care,
My hands in happier moments wove;
Cursed be the wretch, whose sword shall tear
The spell-bound work of wedded love!

Lo! on thy falchion keen and bright,
I shed a trembling consort's tears;
Oh! when their traces meet thy sight,
Remember wretched Eva's fears!

Think how thy lips she fondly pressed,
Think how she wept—compelled to part;
Think, every wound which scars thy breast,
Is doubly marked on Eva's heart!'—

'O thou! my mistress, wife, and friend!'—
Thus Agilthorn with sighs began;
'Thy fond complaints my bosom rend,
Thy tears my fainting soul unman:

In pity cease, my gentle dame,
Such sweetness and such grief to join!
Lest I forget the voice of Fame,
And only list to Love's and thine.

Flow, flow, my tears, unbounded gush!
Rise, rise, my sobs, I set ye free:
Bleed, bleed, my heart! I need not blush
To own that life is dear to me.

The wretch whose lips have pressed the bowl,
The bitter bowl of pain and woe,
May careless reach his mortal goal,
May boldly meet the final blow:



His hopes destroyed, his comfort wrecked,
A happier life he hopes to find;
But what can I in heaven expect,
Beyond the bliss I leave behind?

Oh, no! the joys of yonder skies,
To prosperous love present no charms;
My heaven is placed in Eva's eyes,
My paradise in Eva's arms.

Yet mark me, sweet! if Heaven's command
Hath doomed my fall in martial strife,
Oh! let not anguish tempt thy hand
To rashly break the thread of life!

No! let our boy thy care engross,
Let him thy stay, thy comfort be;
Supply his luckless father's loss,
And love him for thyself and me.

So may oblivion soon efface
The grief which clouds this fatal morn;
And soon thy cheeks afford no trace
Of tears which fall for Agilthorn!'

He said; and couched his quivering lance:
He said; and braced his moony shield:—
Sealed a last kiss, threw a last glance,
Then spurred his steed to Flodden Field.

But Eva, of all joy bereft,
Stood rooted at the castle gate,
And viewed the prints his courser left,
While hurrying at the call of fate.

Forebodings sad her bosom told,
The steed which bore him thence so light,
Her longing eyes would ne'er behold
Again bring home her own true knight.



While many a sigh her bosom heaves,
She thus addressed her orphan page:—
'Dear youth, if e'er my love relieved
The sorrows of thy infant age:

If e'er I taught thy locks to play,
Luxuriant round thy blooming face;
If e'er I wiped thy tears away,
And bade them yield to smiles their place:

Oh! speed thee, swift as steed can bear,
Where Flodden groans with heaps of dead;
And o'er the combat, home repair,
And tell me how my lord has sped.

Till thou return'st each hour 's an age,
An age employed in doubt and pain;
Oh! haste thee, haste, my little foot-page,
Oh! haste and soon return again.'

'Now lady dear, thy grief assuage,
Good tidings soon shall ease thy pain;
I 'll haste, I 'll haste, thy little foot-page,
I 'll haste, and soon return again.'

Then Osway bade his courser fly;
But still, while hapless Eva wept,
Time scarcely seemed his wings to ply,
So slow the tedious moments crept.

And oft she kissed her baby's cheek,
Who slumbered on her throbbing breast;
And now she bade the warder speak,
And now she lulled her child to rest.

'Good warder, say, what meets thy sight?
What see'st from the castle tower?'
'Nought but the rocks of Elginbright,
Nought but the shades of Forest-Bower.'

R. Redgrave, A.R.A., del. J. Bastin, sc



'Oh, pretty babe! thy mother's joy,
Pledge of the purest, fondest flame,
To-morrow's sun, dear helpless boy,
May see thee bear an orphan's name.

Perhaps, e'en now, some Scottish sword
The life-blood of thy father drains;
Perhaps, e'en now, that heart is gored,
Whose streams supplied thy little veins.

O warder, from the castle tower,
Now say what objects meet thy sight?'
'None but the shades of Forest-Bower,
None but the rocks of Elginbright.'

'Smil'st thou, my babe? so smiled thy sire,
When gazing on his Eva's face;
His eyes shot beams of gentle fire,
And joyed such beams in mine to trace.

Sleep, sleep, my babe! of care devoid:
Thy mother breathes this fervent vow—
Oh, never be thy soul employed
On thoughts so sad as hers are now!

Now warder, warder, speak again!
What seest thou from the turret's height?'
'Oh, lady, speeding o'er the plain,
The little foot-page appears in sight!'

Quick beat her heart, short grew her breath;
Close to her breast the babe she drew—
'Now, Heaven,' she cried, 'for life or death!'
And forth to meet the page she flew.

'And is thy lord from danger free?
And is the deadly combat o'er?'—
In silence Osway bent his knee,
And laid a scarf her feet before.



The well-known scarf with blood was stained,
And tears from Osway's eyelids fell;
Too truly Eva's heart explained,
What meant those silent tears to tell.

'Come, come, my babe!' she wildly cried,
'We needs must seek the field of woe:
Come, come, my babe! cast fear aside!
To dig thy father's grave we go.'

'Stay, lady, stay! a storm impends;
Lo! threatening clouds the sky o'erspread;
The thunder roars, the rain descends,
And lightning streaks the heavens with red.

'Hark, hark! the winds tempestuous rave!
Oh! be thy dread intent resigned!
Or, if resolved the storm to brave,
Be this dear infant left behind!'

'No, no! with me my baby stays!
With me he lives; with me he dies!
Flash, lightnings, flash! your friendly blaze
Will shew me where my warrior lies.'

O see she roams the bloody field,
And wildly shrieks her husband's name:
O see she stops and eyes a shield,
A heart the symbol, wrapt in flame.

His armour broke in many a place,
A knight lay stretched that shield beside;
She raised his vizor, kissed his face,
Then on his bosom sunk and died.

Huntsman, their rustic grave behold:
'T is here, at night, the fairy king,
Where sleeps the fair, where sleeps the bold,
Oft forms his light fantastic ring.

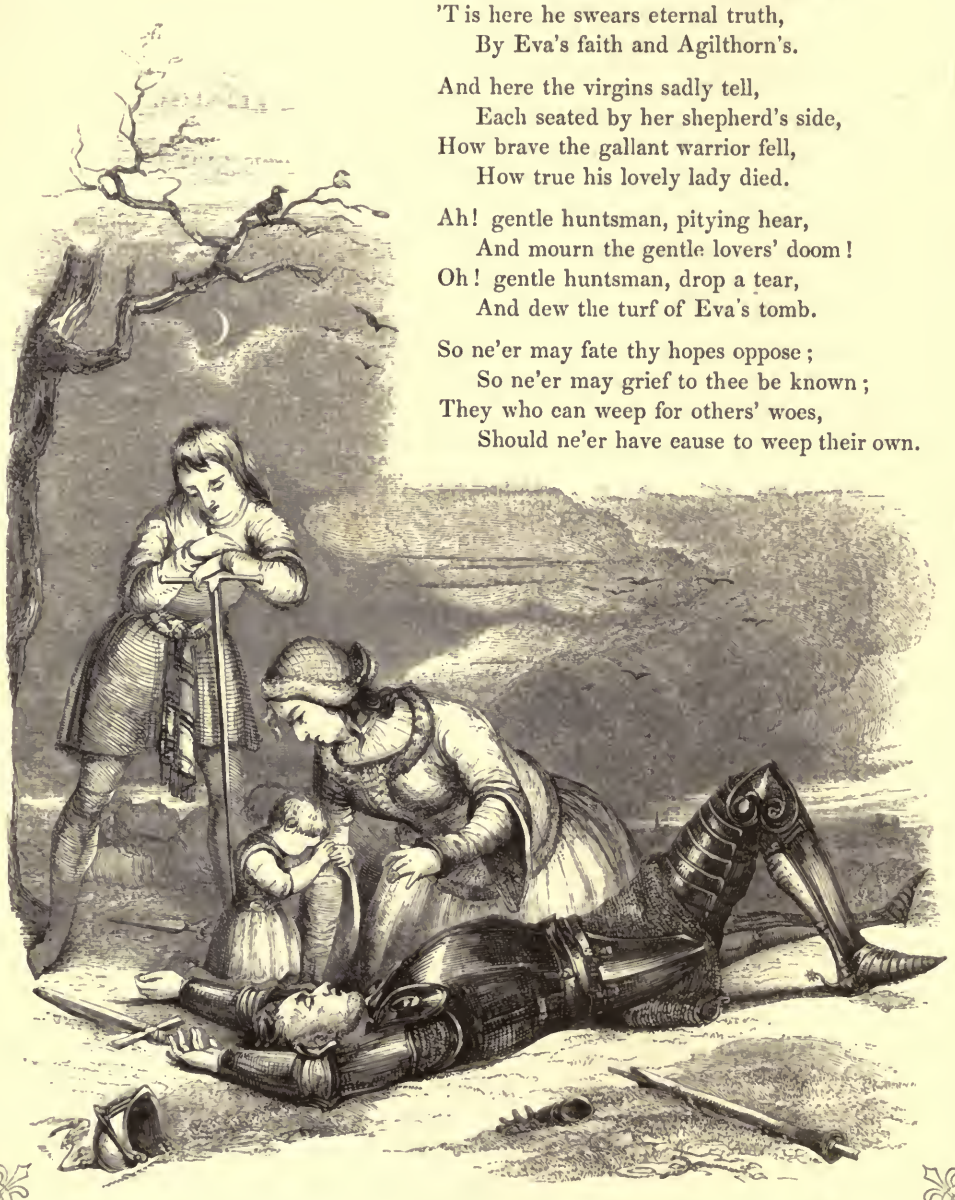
Sir Agilthorn.

'Tis here, at eve, each village youth
With freshest flowers the turf adorns;
'T is here he swears eternal truth,
By Eva's faith and Agilthorn's.

And here the virgins sadly tell,
Each seated by her shepherd's side,
How brave the gallant warrior fell,
How true his lovely lady died.

Ah! gentle huntsman, pitying hear,
And mourn the gentle lovers' doom!
Oh! gentle huntsman, drop a tear,
And dew the turf of Eva's tomb.

So ne'er may fate thy hopes oppose;
So ne'er may grief to thee be known;
They who can weep for others' woes,
Should ne'er have cause to weep their own.



R. Redgrave, A.R.A. del. Vizetelly sc.

JOHNIE OF BREADISLEE. This is styled by Sir Walter Scott "an ancient Nithsdale ballad," the hero of which appears to have been an outlaw and deer-stealer; probably one of the broken men residing upon the border. It is sometimes said that he possessed the old castle of Morton, in Dumfries-shire, now ruinous:—"Near to this castle there was a park, built by Sir Thomas Randolph, on the face of a very great and high hill; so artificially, that, by the advantage of the hill, all wild beasts, such as deers, harts, and roes, and hares, did easily leap in, but could not get out again; and if any other cattle, such as cows, sheep, or goats, did voluntarily leap in, or were forced to do it, *it is doubted* if their owners were permitted to get them out again." But the date of Johnie's history must be very remote, for the scene of his exploits has been reduced from the condition of a deer-forest to that of a cultivated domain from a time "beyond the memory of tradition."* There are several versions of the ballad; the one we have selected is that printed by Sir Walter Scott—"from the different copies." Mr. Motherwell reprints it, but gives also these fragments of a more ancient composition, entitled "Johnie of Braidisbank:"—

Johnie rose up on a May morning,
Called for water to wash his hands;
And he 's awa' to Braidisbanks,
To ding the dun deer down.

Johnie lookit east, and Johnie lookit west,
And it 's lang before the sun;
And there did he spy the dun deer lie,
Beneath a bush of brume.
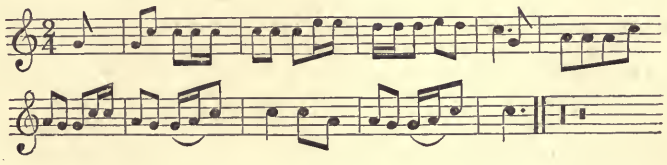
Johnie shot, and the dun deer lap,
And he 's wounded her in the side;
Out then spake his sister's son,
'And the neist will lay her pride.'

They 've eaten sae mickle o' the gude venison,
And they 've drunken sae muckle o' the blude;
That they 've fallen into as sound a sleep,
As gif that they were dead.

It's doun, and it's doun, and it's doun, doun,
And it's doun amang the scroggs;
And there ye 'll espy twa bonny boys lie,
Asleep amang their dogs.

They 've waukened Johnie out o' his sleep,
And he 's drawn to him his coat;
'My fingers five save me alive,
And a stout heart fail me not!'

Mr. Motherwell gives also the music to which the old ballad was sung:—



And Mr. Motherwell suggests the introduction of the following beautiful stanza (preserved by Mr. Finlay), after the nineteenth stanza in the printed copy. It is, as

* Another tradition, according to Motherwell, assigns Braid, in the neighbourhood of Edinburgh, to have been the scene of the "woful hunting;"—"and," writes Mr. Cunningham, "Breadeslee, near Lochmaben, has been pointed out as the more probable residence of the hero of the song; and the scenery in the neighbourhood, and the traditions of the country, countenance the supposition."

he justly remarks, "so descriptive of the languor of approaching death," that it is surprising Sir Walter Scott should have omitted to adopt it:—

'There 's no a bird in a' this forest
Will do as mickle for me,
As dip its wing in the wan water,
And straik it on my e'e bree.'

Another copy has been printed by Robert Chambers.—Scottish Ballads—partly taken from the ballads of Scott and Motherwell, and partly from the "recitation of a lady resident at Peebles, and from a MS. copy submitted to him by Mr. Kinloch." He publishes, for the first time, no fewer than ten additional stanzas; we select three, as indicating that the hero held a higher station than that of a mere deer-stealer:—

His cheeks were like the roses red,
His neck was like the snaw;
He was the bonniest gentleman,
My eyes they ever saw.

His coat was o' the scarlet red,
His vest was o' the same;
His stockings were o' the worset lace,
And buckles tied to the same.

The shirt that was upon his back,
Was o' the holland fine;
The doublet that was over that,
Was o' the Lincoln twine.

These stanzas, however, may have been a modern interpolation. Mr. Cunningham, also, prints a version, into which he has evidently introduced some improvements of his own. We copy the concluding verse:—

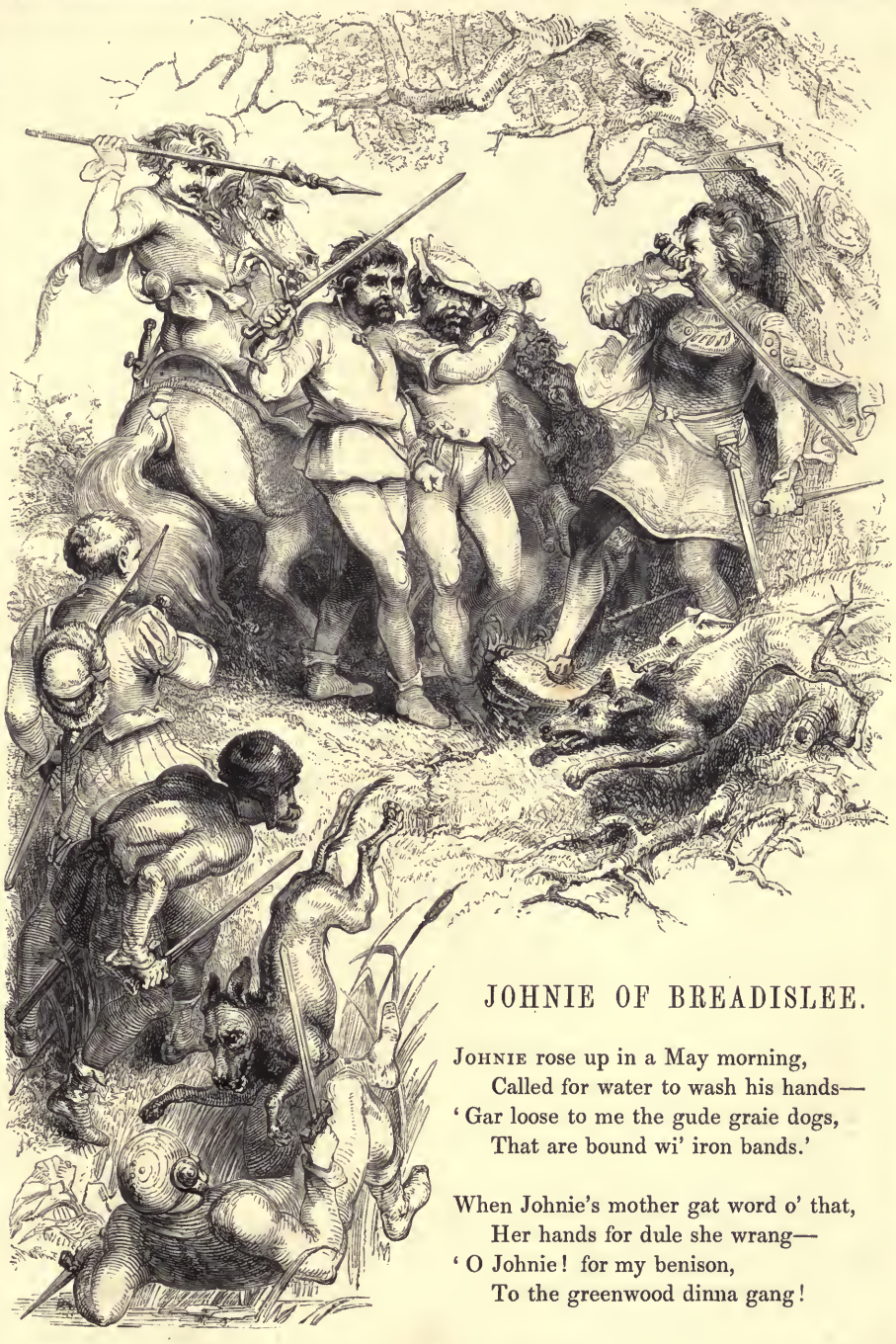
'Oh lay my brown sword by my side,
And my bent bow at my feet;
And stay the howling o' my gray dogs,
That sound may be my sleep.'
His dogs are dead, his bent bow broke,
And his shafts that flew sae free;
And he lies dead near Durisdeer,
Fair Johnie of Breadislee.

The daring exploits of border outlaws are the themes of many ancient ballads; the reckless character of their lives, their indomitable courage, and continual escapes from their enemies and the law, suggested favourable topics to the old minstrels; several of them are singular for the adventures they describe, although few advance very high claims to poetic merit. One of the most striking is published by Ritson ("Ancient Songs"), and re-published, with "better readings," by Scott. It is entitled by Ritson "The Life and Death of Sir Hugh of the Grime;" and by Scott, "Hughie the Græme." The following are the introductory verses:—

Gude Lord Scroope 's to the hunting gane,
He has ridden o'er moss and muir;
And he has grippit Hughie the Græme,
For stealing o' the bishop's mare.

'Now, good Lord Scroope, this may not be!
Here hangs a broadsword by my side;
And if that thou canst conquer me,
The matter it may soon be tryed.'

'I ne'er was afraid of a traitor thief;
Although thy name be Hughie the Græme,
I'll make thee repent thee of thy deeds,
If God but grant me life and time.'



JOHNIE OF BREADISLEE.

Johnie rose up in a May morning,
Called for water to wash his hands—
'Gar loose to me the gude graie dogs,
That are bound wi' iron bands.'

When Johnie's mother gat word o' that,
Her hands for dule she wrang—
'O Johnie! for my benison,
To the greenwood dinna gang!

Sibson, del. Linton, sc.



Eneugh ye hae o' gude wheat bread,
And eneugh o' the blude-red wine;
And, therefore, for nae venison, Johnie,
I pray ye, stir frae hame.'

But Johnie 's busk't up his gude bend bow,
His arrows, ane by ane;
And he has gane to Durrisdeer,
To hunt the dun deer down.

As he came down by Merriemass,
And in by the benty line,
There has he espied a deer lying
Aneath a bush of ling.

Johnie he shot, and the dun deer lap,
And he wounded her on the side;
But, atween the water and the brae,
His hounds they laid her pride.

And Johnie has bryttled the deer sae weel,
That he 's had out her liver and lungs;
And wi' these he has feasted his bluidy hounds,
As if they had been earl's sons,

They eat sae much o' the venison,
And drank sae much o' the blude,
That Johnie and a' his bluidy hounds,
Fell asleep as they had been dead.

And by there came a silly auld carle,
An ill death mote he die!
For he 's awa' to Hislinton,
Where the seven foresters did lie.

'What news, what news, ye gray headed carle,
What news bring ye to me?'
'I bring nae news,' said the gray headed carle,
'Save what these eyes did see.

As I came down by Merriemass,
And down among the scroggs,

Johnie of Breadislee.



The bonniest childe that ever I saw
Lay sleeping amang his dogs.

The shirt that was upon his back
Was o' the holland fine;
The doublet which was over that
Was o' the lincome twine.

The buttons that were on his sleeve
Were o' the goud sae gude:
The gude graie hounds he lay amang,
Their mouths were dyed wi' blude.'

Then out and spak the first forester,
The heid man ower them a'—
'If this be Johnie o' Breadislee,
Nae nearer will we draw.'

But up and spak the sixth forester
(His sister's son was he),
'If this be Johnie o' Breadislee,
We soon shall gar him die!'

The first flight of arrows the foresters shot,
They wounded him on the knee;
And out and spak the seventh forester,
'The next will gar him die.'

Johnie 's set his back against an aik,
His fute against a stane;
And he has slain the seven foresters,
He has slain them a' but ane.

He has broke three ribs in that ane's side,
But and his collar bane;
He 's laid him twa-fald ower his steed,
Bade him carry the tidings hame.

'O is there nae a bonnie bird,
Can sing as I can say?—
Could flee away to my mother's bower,
And tell to fetch Johnie away?'

Sibson, del. Linton, sc.

Johnie of Breadislee.



The starling flew to his mother's window stane,
It whistled and it sang;
And aye the ower word o' the tune
Was—'Johnie tarries lang!'

They made a rod o' the hazel bush,
Another o' the slae-thorn tree,
And mony, mony were the men
At fetching o'er Johnie.

Then out and spak his auld mother,
And fast her tears did fa'—
'Ye wad nae be warned, my son Johnie,
Frae the hunting to bide awa'.

Aft hae I brought to Breadislee,
The less gear and the mair;
But I ne'er brought to Breadislee,
What grieved my heart sae sair.

But wae betyde that silly auld carle,
An ill death shall he die!
For the highest tree in Merriemass
Shall be his morning's fee.'

Now Johnie's gude bend bow is broke,
And his gude graie dogs are slain;
And his bodie lies dead in Durrisdeer,
And his hunting it is done.

Sibson del. Linton, sc.

THE DOWIE DENS OF YARROW. This ballad was first published in the "Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border;" but other versions of it were, previously, in circulation, and it is stated by Sir Walter Scott to have been "a very great favourite among the inhabitants of Ettrick Forest," where it is universally believed to be founded on fact. Sir Walter, indeed, "found it easy to collect a variety of copies;" and from them he collated the present edition—avowedly for the purpose of "suiting the tastes of these more light and giddy-paced times." A copy is contained in Motherwell's "Minstrelsy, Ancient and Modern;" another, in Buchan's "Ballads and Songs of the North of Scotland:" it, no doubt, originated the popular composition beginning—

Busk ye, busk ye, my bonny, bonny bride,

by Hamilton, of Bangour, first published in Ramsay's "Tea Table Miscellany;" and suggested the ballad "The Braes of Yarrow," by the Rev. John Logan. In Herd's collection, in Ritson's "Scottish Songs," and in the "Tea Table Miscellany," are to be found fragments of another ballad, entitled "Willie's drowned in Yarrow," of which this is the concluding stanza:—

She sought him east, she sought him west,
She sought him braid and narrow;
Syne in the cleaving of a craig,
She found him drowned in Yarrow.

Indeed, "Yarrow stream" has been a fertile source of poetry, and seems to have inspired the poets; the very sound is seductive; and, as Mr. Buchan remarks, "all who have attempted to sing its praise, or celebrate the actions of those who have been its visitors, have almost universally succeeded in their attempts." The ballad he publishes, is entitled "The Braes of Yarrow;" it bears a close resemblance, in its more prominent features, to that collated by Sir Walter Scott, but is far more rugged and less poetic: take for example the opening verse:—

Ten lords sat drinking at the wine,
Intill a morning early;
There fell a combat them amang,
It must be fought—nae parly.

The version preserved by Mr. Motherwell was taken down "from the recitation of an old woman in Kilbarcan," and is chiefly valuable as shewing the state in which the song is preserved in the west of Scotland. It is entitled "The Dowie Downs of Yarrow." The main incidents are similar to those contained in the ballad of Scott; but the style is, as may be expected, much inferior. The two introductory verses may suffice as a sample of the whole:—

There were three lords birling at the wine,
On the Dowie Downs o' Yarrow;
They made a compact them between,
They would go fecht to-morrow.

'Thou took our sister to be thy wife,
And thou ne'er thocht her thy marrow;
Thou stealed her frae her daddie's back,
When she was the rose o' Yarrow.'
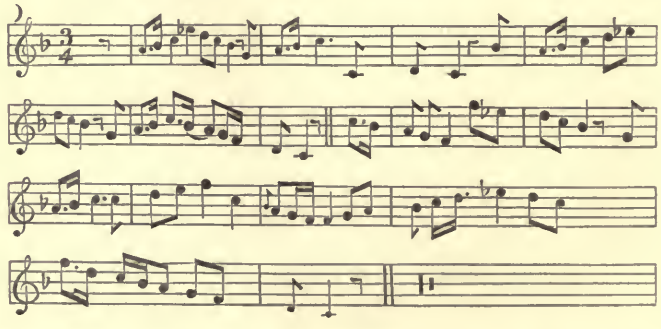
Another version was published by Robert Chambers, in his "Scottish Ballads," —"chiefly taken from a fragment in Herd's collection (which we have introduced in a note), a few stanzas and lines from Buchan's copy, and part of a ballad printed by Jamieson, entitled 'Lizie Lindsay,'" which Jamieson gives in an imperfect, and Buchan in an entire, shape. Mr. Chambers, however, has been "under the necessity of altering several lines and verses, and re-writing others." Mr. Allan Cunningham, also, prints yet another version, principally copied from that of Sir Walter Scott, but omitting the three first verses, and reforming the remainder. Mr. Cunningham states, that "he had seen a fragment of the same song in the handwriting of Burns," —of which he has given three verses; the first is as follows:—

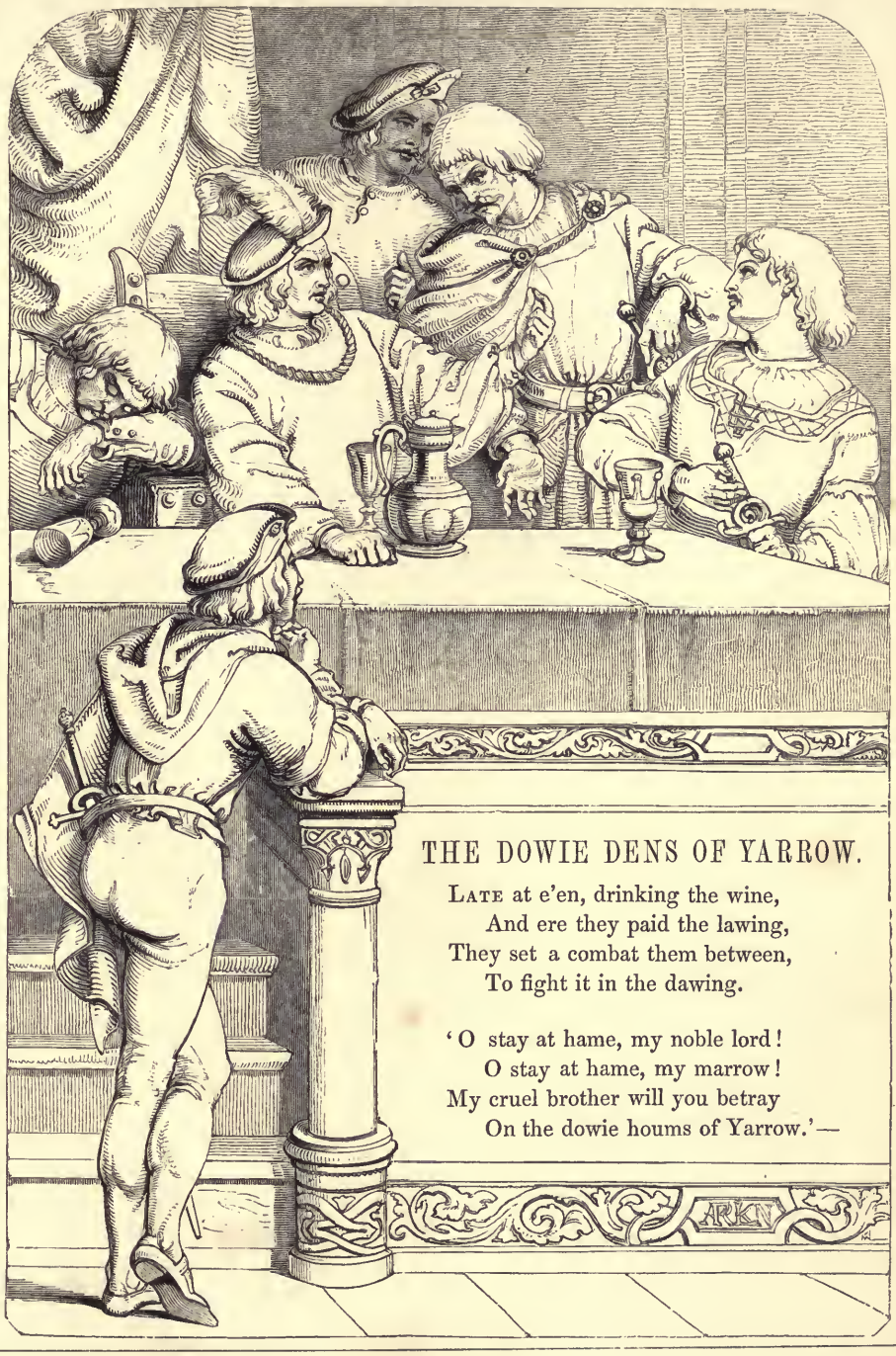
'Where shall I gang, my ain true love,
Where shall I gang to hide me?
For weel I ken, i' yere father's bower,
It wad be death to find me.'

'O go you to yon tavern house,
And there count o'er your lawin;
And if I be a woman true,
I'll meet you in the dawin.'

That the several versions of the story, scattered among the people, and preserved by them in some form or other, had one common origin there can be little doubt. "Tradition," according to Sir Walter Scott, "places the event recorded in the song very early, and it is probable the ballad was composed soon afterwards, although the language has been modernised in the course of its transmission to us, through the inaccurate channel of oral tradition." "The hero of the ballad," he adds, "was a knight of great bravery, called Scott;" and he believes it refers to a duel fought at Deucharswyre, of which Annan's Treat is a part, betwixt John Scott, of Tushielaw, and his brother-in-law, Walter Scott, third son of Robert of Thirlstane, in which the latter was slain. Annan's Treat is a low muir, on the banks of the Yarrow, lying to the west of Yarrow kirk. Two tall unhewn masses of stone are erected about eighty yards distant from each other, and the least child, that can herd a cow, will tell the passenger, that there lie "the two lords who were slain in single combat." Sir Walter also informs us that, according to tradition, the murderer was the brother of either the wife or the betrothed bride of the murdered; and that the alleged cause of quarrel was, the lady's father having proposed to endow her with half of his property upon her marriage with a warrior of such renown. The name of the murderer is said to have been Annan, hence the place of combat is still called Annan's Treat.

The music to which the ballad was sung has been given by Sir Walter Scott:—





THE DOWIE DENS OF YARROW.

LATE at e'en, drinking the wine,
And ere they paid the lawing,
They set a combat them between,
To fight it in the dawing.

'O stay at hame, my noble lord!
O stay at hame, my marrow!
My cruel brother will you betray
On the dowie houms of Yarrow.'—

Franklin, del. Fred. Branston, sc.

The Dowie Dens of Yarrow.



'O fare ye weel, my ladye gaye!
O fare ye weel, my Sarah!
For I maun gae, though I ne'er return
Frae the dowie banks o' Yarrow.'

She kissed his cheek, she kaimed his hair,
As oft she had done before, O;
She belted him with his noble brand,
And he 's away to Yarrow.

As he gaed up the Tennies bank,
I wot he gaed wi' sorrow,
Till, down in a den, he spied nine armed men,
On the dowie houms of Yarrow.

'O! come ye here to part your land,
The bonnie forest thorough?
Or come ye here to wield your brand,
On the dowie houms of Yarrow?'—

'I come not here to part my land,
And neither to beg nor borrow;
I come to wield my noble brand,
On the bonnie banks of Yarrow.'

'If I see all, ye 're nine to ane,
And that 's an unequal marrow;
Yet will I fight while lasts my brand,
On the bonnie banks of Yarrow.'

Four has he hurt, and five has slain,
On the bonnie braes of Yarrow;
Till that stubborn knight came him behind,
And ran his body thorough.

'Gae hame, gae hame, good brother John,
And tell your sister Sarah
To come and lift her leafu' lord;
He 's sleeping sound on Yarrow.'—

The Dowie Dens of Yarrow.



'Yest'reen I dreamed a dolefu' dream;*
I fear there will be sorrow!
I dreamed I pu'd the heather green,
Wi' my true love, on Yarrow.

O gentle wind, that bloweth south,
From where my love repaireth,
Convey a kiss from his dear mouth,
And tell me how he fareth!

But in the glen strive arméd men;
They 've wrought me dole and sorrow;
They 've slain—the comeliest knight they 've slain,
He bleeding lies on Yarrow.'

As she sped down yon high high hill,
She gaed wi' dole and sorrow;
And in the den spied ten slain men,
On the dowie banks of Yarrow.

* The following is the fragment given by Mr. Herd, "to the tune of Leaderhaughs and Yarrow:—"

'I dream'd a dreary dream last night;
God keep us a' frae sorrow;
I dream'd I pu'd the birk sae green,
Wi' my true luve on Yarrow.'

'I 'll read your dream, my sister dear,
I 'll tell you a' your sorrow;
You pu'd the birk wi' your true luve;
He 's kill'd, he 's kill'd, on Yarrow.'

'O gentle wind, that bloweth south,
To where my luve repaireth,
Convey a kiss from his dear mouth,
And tell me how he fareth.

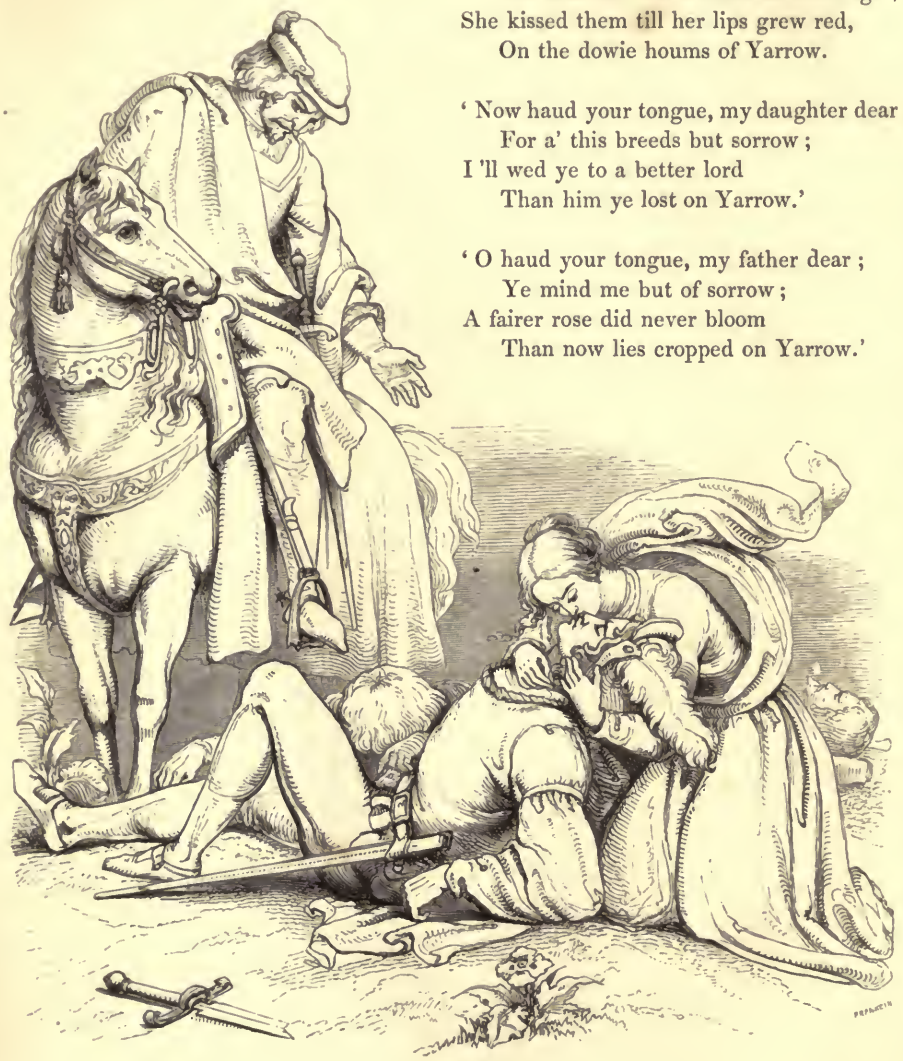
But o'er yon glen run arméd men,
Have wrought me dule and sorrow;
They 've slain, they 've slain, ta comeliest swain,
He bleeding lies on Yarrow.'

The Dowie Dens of Yarrow.

She kissed his cheek, she kaimed his hair,
She searched his wounds all thorough;
She kissed them till her lips grew red,
On the dowie houms of Yarrow.

'Now haud your tongue, my daughter dear!
For a' this breeds but sorrow;
I 'll wed ye to a better lord
Than him ye lost on Yarrow.'

'O haud your tongue, my father dear;
Ye mind me but of sorrow;
A fairer rose did never bloom
Than now lies cropped on Yarrow.'



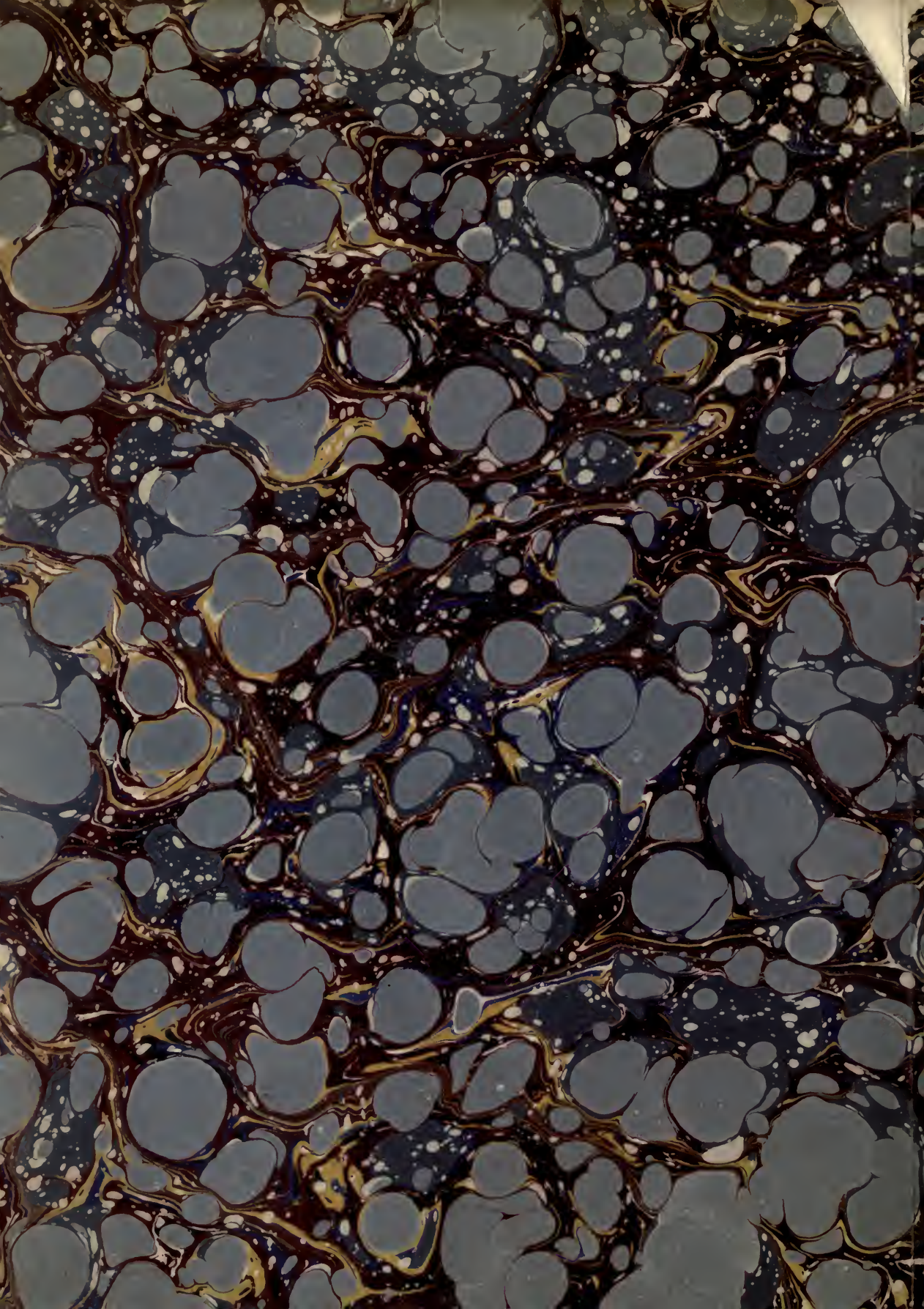
Franklin, del. Evans sc.

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